Poetry and Poetics in the Presocratic Philosophers

Reading Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles as Literature

Tom Mackenzie

POETRY AND POETICS IN THE PRESOCRATIC PHILOSOPHERS

Of the Presocratic thinkers traditionally credited with the foundation of Greek philosophy, Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles are exceptional for writing in verse. This is the first book-length literary-critical study of their work. It locates the surviving fragments in their performative and wider cultural contexts, applying intertextual and intratextual analyses in order to reconstruct the significance and impact they conveyed for ancient audiences and readers. Building on insights from literary theory and the philosophy of literature, the book sheds new light on these authors' philosophical projects and enriches our appreciation of their works as literary artefacts. It also expands our knowledge of the genres in which they wrote, of the literary culture of the Western Greek world, and of the development of Greek poetics from the Archaic to the Classical periods, exposing the influence of these thinkers on more famous Sophistic and Platonic ideas about literature.

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For my mother and the memory of my father

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Abbreviations

Abbreviations of ancient authors and works follow those of *OCD*[4] or, in the case of Greek texts for which it does not provide abbreviations, LSJ. Abbreviations of journal titles in the bibliography follow those of *L'Année philologique*. In addition, the following abbreviations are used:

BNJ	I. Worthington (ed.) (2007–). *Brill's New Jacoby.* Leiden. Online at https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-jacoby (accessed 18 September 2019).
BNP	H. Cancik, H. Schneider, M. Landfester, C. F. Salazar and F. G. Gentry (eds.) (1996–). *Brill's New Pauly.* Leiden. Online at https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/brill-s-new-pauly (accessed 18 September 2019).
CEG	Hansen, P. A. (1983). *Carmina epigraphica graeca saeculorum VIII–V a. Chr. N.* Berlin.
DK	H. Diels, and W. Kranz (1952). *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker.* 6th ed. 3 vols. Zurich.
FGE	D. L. Page (1982). *Further Greek Epigrams.* Cambridge.
FGrH	F. Jacoby (ed.) (1923–). *Fragmente der griechischen Historiker.* Berlin/Leiden.
KRS	G. S. Kirk, J. E. Raven and M. Schofield (1983). *The Presocratic Philosophers.* 2nd ed. Cambridge.
L.-P.	E. Lobel and D. L. Page (1963). *Poetarum Lesbiorum fragmenta.* Corr. ed. Oxford.
LfgrE	B. Snell et al. (eds.) (1955–2010). *Lexikon des frühgriechischen Epos.* 4 vols. Göttingen.
LM	A. Laks and G. W. Most (2016). *Early Greek Philosophy.* 9 vols. Cambridge, MA.
LSJ	H. G. Liddell and R. Scott (1925–1940). *Greek–English Lexicon.* 9th ed., rev. H. Stuart Jones. Oxford.

M.-W.	R. Merkelbach and M. L. West (1967). *Fragmenta Hesiodea*. Oxford.
OCD[4]	S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth and E. Eidinow (eds.). *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*. 4th ed. Oxford.
OF	A. Bernabé (2004–2007) *Poetae epici graeci: Testimonia et fragmenta Pars II*. 3 vols. Munich, Leipzig and Berlin.
PCG	R. Kassel and C. Austin (eds.). *Poetae comici graeci*. 8 vols. (1983–2001).
PMG	D. L. Page (1962). *Poetae melici graeci.* Oxford.
SH	H. Lloyd-Jones and P. Parsons (1983). *Supplementum Hellenisticum*. Berlin.
SVF	H. von Arnim (ed.) (1903–1905). *Stoicorum veterum fragmenta*. Stuttgart.
W	M. L. West (1989–1992). *Iambi et elegi graeci ante Alexandrum cantata*. 2 vols. 2nd ed. Oxford.

Note on Fragment Numbers

I generally refer to fragments and *testimonia* of the Presocratics and Sophists using the numbering systems of both LM and DK, with the LM number placed first. 'P', 'D' and 'R' numbers are from LM, whereas 'A' and 'B' numbers are from DK. Occasionally, it has not been possible to include both, since some fragments and *testimonia* are only included in one or other edition. A further complication is that the two editions do not always divide the fragments in the same way: DK may include lines in a fragment that are considered spurious by LM, and, in some cases, two fragments that are kept separate in DK are joined together in LM (e.g. Parmenides B7 and B8 in DK are treated in LM as a single passage, D8). Where I only give the fragment numbers and a single line number, it can be assumed that the extent of the fragment – and therefore the line number – is the same in both editions. For instance, Xenophanes 'D49=B34.4' refers to line 4 of both D49 and B34, and the extent of the two fragments is identical. Where I give two separate line numbers, this is not the case. For instance, Parmenides D8.2=B7.2 refers to line 2 of D8, which is the same as line 2 of B7, but the two fragments are vastly different in extent, since D8 also includes the much longer B8.

Introduction
Philosophy and Poetry, Truth and Symbolism

1 Aims, Methods and Assumptions

> Ἐμπεδοκλῆς δὲ σπασαμένου τὸ ξίφος ἤδη νεανίου τινὸς ἐπὶ τὸν αὑτοῦ ξενοδόχον Ἄγχιτον, ἐπεὶ δικάσας δημοσίαι τὸν τοῦ νεανίου πατέρα ἐθανάτωσε, καὶ ἀίξαντος, ὡς εἶχε συγχύσεως καὶ θυμοῦ, ξιφήρους παῖσαι τὸν τοῦ πατρὸς καταδικαστὴν ὡσανεὶ φονέα Ἄγχιτον, μεθαρμοσάμενος ὡς εἶχε τὴν λύραν καὶ πεπαντικόν τι μέλος καὶ κατασταλτικὸν μεταχειρισάμενος εὐθὺς ἀνεκρούσατο τὸ ‘νηπενθὲς ἄχολόν τε, κακῶν ἐπίληθες ἁπάντων’ κατὰ τὸν ποιητήν [δ 221], καὶ τόν τε ἑαυτοῦ ξενοδόχον Ἄγχιτον θανάτου ἐρρύσατο καὶ τὸν νεανίαν ἀνδροφονίας. ἱστορεῖται δ’ οὗτος τῶν Ἐμπεδοκλέους γνωρίμων ὁ δοκιμώτατος ἔκτοτε γενέσθαι.
>
> Once, a certain young man drew a sword on Empedocles’ host, Anchitus, since, as a judge, he had sentenced the young man’s father to death. The youth, in confusion and anger, and bearing a sword, rushed to strike the man who had condemned his father as if he, Anchitus, were a murderer. Empedocles, since he had the lyre, changed its tuning, played a softening and soothing strain, and immediately struck up the line, ‘free from sorrow and lacking anger, forgetful of all ills’ [Od. 4.221], in the words of the poet, and he saved his own host, Anchitus, from death, and the young man from homicide. And it is reported that this man then became the most distinguished of Empedocles’ pupils. (Iamblichus *VP* 113=Empedocles P17<A15)

Iamblichus’ wonderful story (probably deriving from the *c.* 100 CE Neopythagorean, Nicomachus of Gerasa) has, understandably, been given short shrift by most interpreters of Empedocles,[1] but it is a revealing document in the history of his ancient reception. Here, there is little hint of his importance for the traditions of science and

[1] For an exception, note Obbink (1993) 80–1.

philosophy. Instead, he is a poetic performer, striking a chord on the lyre and reciting a line of Homer. As with other ancient accounts of poets' lives, the story could be understood as an interpretation of Empedocles' poetry.[2] It raises the themes of blood guilt and purification so prominent in the surviving fragments. The performance of an Odyssean line is suggestive of his use of epic metre and diction. But perhaps most revealing is the effect that Empedocles' performance is portrayed as having on its listener. Some idea of this effect may be gleaned from a closer examination of the line he performs. *Od.* 4.221 describes the drug that Helen puts into the wine for Telemachus and Peisistratus. Anyone who drinks it would not shed a tear, 'not even if his mother or father were to die' (*Od.* 4.224), a comment that hints at Telemachus' fears that his own father has perished. At least since Plutarch (*Mor.* 614b), Helen's drug has been interpreted metapoetically, as symbolising the emotional function of the story she tells in accompaniment to the drinking. This interpretation is put into action in Iamblichus' anecdote: the swift transition to the outcome of the affair implies that the performance has the immediate, affective impact of Helen's drug, causing the young man, like Telemachus, to forget his anguish at his father's death. If Empedocles here lived up to the ideals of philosophy familiar to modernity (and already promoted in Plato's dialogues), we might expect him to persuade his addressee by means of rational argument. But the young man does not change his mind after evaluating any claims presented by Empedocles or the Homeric line quoted. Instead, he is affected emotionally, in real time, whilst listening to a performance, an experience that alters his outlook on life.

This sort of emotional, transformative effect is also implicit in the language Empedocles uses of his own poetry, where the narrator has a reputation for being able to provide a 'healing utterance' (εὐηκέα βάξιν, D4=B112.11) and his voice is presented as a 'pure stream' (καθαρὴν ... πηγήν, D44=B3.2), implying that the text itself cleanses its audience like the holy springs used in ritual purifications.[3] It is paralleled in several famous metapoetic passages from early Greek hexameter. Helen's drug is remarkably similar to the song of Hesiod's Muses, who impart 'forgetfulness of ills and ceasing of cares' (*Theog.* 55; note also *Theog.* 96–103), and it is for the same purpose that Achilles sings of the glories of men, distracting

[2] For ancient biographies of poets as a form of literary criticism, note Haubold (2010) 13–4 (on Hesiod) and Graziosi (2006). On ancient biographies of poets more generally, see Lefkowitz (2013) (orig. published 1981); Kivilo (2010); and, on Homer, Graziosi (2002); on Hesiod, Koning (2010).

[3] See the discussion of this fragment in Chapter 3 Section 4c below.

himself from his anger and frustration (*Il.* 9.186–9). In these passages (among several others),[4] verse does not serve primarily as a mnemonic to preserve important information or as a means of publicising grand claims; rather, its function is to provide a particular experience. An ancient reception, the poetological language of the fragments themselves, and the generic context all bespeak the affective qualities of Empedocles' text.

This aspect is overlooked in the prevailing tendency to read Empedocles in a philosophical manner, primarily for the purposes of reconstructing and evaluating his propositional content.[5] The same preoccupation has predominated to an even greater extent in scholarship on Xenophanes and Parmenides. This tendency has a long history. Already in the fifth century BCE, Hippias of Elis excerpted the cosmological claims of these Presocratic poets and other authors, categorising them by subject in his lost *Sunagoge*, a practice that suggests that he was more interested in their ideas than in any aesthetic experience of their poetry. Gorgias seems to have provided a similar resumé of previous opinions at the start of his *On What Is Not* (D26a=[Arist.] *MXG* 5.979a12–16).[6] For the most part, Plato and Aristotle's procedure when discussing the Presocratics is fundamentally analogous to that of modern philosophical scholarship. Relying heavily on Hippias' and Gorgias' collections, they take the claims made (or reportedly made) by the figures in question and explore their entailments and implications, assessing their coherence, validity and veracity.[7] In short, they treat them as philosophers, and this categorisation has stood ever since. Even such astute literary critics as Karl Reinhardt, Bruno Snell and Hermann Fränkel, working at a time before sub-disciplinary boundaries within the field of Classics had reached their current rigidity, were primarily occupied with the thoughts and mentality of these authors, rather than aesthetic or emotional matters, as part of a teleological 'history of the mind' (*Geistesgeschichte*).[8] This prioritisation of propositional content is, of course, a manifestation of the famous 'ancient quarrel' between philosophy

[4] E.g. passages that depict the 'pleasure' of song: *Il.* 1.474, 9.186, 189, 18.526, 604; *Od.* 1.347; 8.91, 368; 12.188; Hes. *Theog.* 917; passages that associate song and storytelling with 'longing' (ἵμερος): note *Od.* 1.421, 17.518–21, 18.194, 304, 23.144. On these, see Ritoók (1989) 333–9; Halliwell (2011) 45–50.

[5] For this as the prevailing method in the history of philosophy, see e.g. Williams (2006) 257; Barnes (2011a), (2011b).

[6] On Hippias' collection, see Snell (1944); Patzer (1986); on Gorgias', Mansfeld (1985); on both, Palmer (2008).

[7] See e.g. Aristotle's critical overview of previous opinions at *Metaph.* 1.3–10, 983a24–993b26, the root of later groupings of the Presocratics, on which see Cherniss (1935); Frede (2008). On Plato's treatment of the Presocratics, see Palmer (1999); McCabe (2000).

[8] See especially Reinhardt (1916); Snell (1924), (1953); Fränkel (1955), (1975b).

and poetry mentioned by Plato (*Resp.* 10.607b–e), who crystallised the notion that the two activities are fundamentally incompatible, presenting arguments that poetry (or at least, mimetic poetry) seduces the irrational part of the soul, hindering an audience's rational evaluation of the matters portrayed. Since Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles are retrospectively categorised as philosophers, there has often been an implicit assumption that they cannot be poets in any more essential sense than that they happen to use verse.[9] Consequently, they are relatively neglected by scholars of Greek poetry.[10]

In light of this neglect, the present study applies methods from modern literary criticism of ancient poetry to the texts of these three authors, whilst also remaining sensitive to their philosophical significance, in an attempt to explain what sorts of experiences they could provide to the attentive listener and by what methods. In the following chapters, I enlist a range of historical and archaeological evidence that might seem superfluous for the history of philosophy to help reconstruct the wider cultural norms that could affect an audience's response. Ancient literary criticism and the ancient reception history of these authors, often of little value in the reconstruction of their arguments, provide evidence for their emotional and aesthetic impact: Iamblichus' anecdote tells us virtually nothing about Empedocles' cosmology, but it does indicate something about the way in which his poetry was received in antiquity. Some might question the value of such late evidence,[11] but even if the story arose some centuries after Empedocles' lifetime, it is still the product of a pre-modern, primarily polytheistic society. It therefore reflects a reception context vastly more similar than our own to that which he could have expected.

Of special importance for this investigation is our evidence for the literary context, by which I mean the performance context and the wider network of texts which determine an audience's 'horizon of expectation' (*Erwartungshorizont*)[12] concerning literary genres and *topoi*. The readings offered here are intertextual, both in the sense that they identify and interpret particular allusions – that is, instances where an author refers to another text and expects such a reference to be identified by at least some of

[9] Though Kranz (1916) 1163 makes this assumption explicit. On the history of the 'ancient quarrel' see the scholarship cited at Chapter 1 n. 2 below.

[10] Note that they are absent from Bernabé (1987–2007), an otherwise exhaustive edition of fragmentary early Greek hexameter poetry.

[11] See Feeney (1995) 303–4, criticising Cairns (1972) 32 on these grounds, but we should not overlook the crucial respects in which Imperial literary culture was similar to that of the Archaic period and different from our own.

[12] The expression was influentially coined by Jauss (1970).

the audience –[13] and in the sense that they posit typological resemblances between texts where no such allusion can be plausibly hypothesised.[14] Chapter 2 offers a reading of Parmenides' proem within the context of other ancient accounts of supernatural journeys to places beyond the usual mortal realm, including some Near Eastern examples from outside the Greek tradition. Although these examples were almost certainly unfamiliar to Parmenides and his audiences, they originated from an ancient literary culture which was broadly similar to, and had at least some points of contact with, that of the Greeks.[15] They are therefore taken as evidence for the sorts of narratives which could have been familiar and so can elucidate the connotations and particularities of Parmenides' text. In Chapter 3, the wider context of Greek stories about wandering blood-exiles supports an interpretation of the function of Empedocles' story of the transmigrating *daimon* who has been exiled from the gods for committing bloody deeds.

Though this study does not aim to offer radically new interpretations or detailed analyses of the arguments, its exploration of potential audience responses cannot be fully divorced from an investigation of the philosophy. As a growing body of work has demonstrated, the application of literary-critical methods can provide important insights into the Presocratics' claims and objectives. An early milestone in this approach was Alexander Mourelatos' *The Route of Parmenides* (first published 1970),[16] which provided an analysis of Parmenides' use of metre and narrative in support of the contention that the poem essentially outlines a 'quest' for truth, a 'way' of thinking that might lead to such an entity. In a similar vein, more recent works by Simon Trépanier on the unity of Empedocles' thought, Jenny Bryan on the concepts of likeness and likelihood in Xenophanes and Parmenides, and Shaul Tor on early Greek epistemology have enhanced

[13] It has been doubted whether such allusions are a feature of early Greek poetry (e.g. on Homer, Nagy [1979] 42; Schein [1984] 28; on lyric, R. Fowler [1987] 20–33; on early Greek performed poetry more generally, Calame [2005] 7–10), but they are present beyond reasonable doubt in Parmenides and Empedocles (see, especially, Wright [1998]; Most [2007]) and are quite plausibly identified in Xenophanes (e.g. Classen [1989]; Bryan [2012] 6–57). For a defence of the language of 'allusion' in early Greek epic, see B. Currie (2016) 4–36; and, in lyric, Garner (1990) 1–20.

[14] That is, Kristeva's original sense of intertextuality, not as a shorthand for 'allusion', but as the quality whereby texts exist in a matrix consisting of other texts (Kristeva [1980] 66; see also Culler [1981] 110–31). For particularly influential discussions of these issues in ancient literature, note Conte (1986); D. Fowler (1997); Hinds (1998). 'Intertextuality' in this sense is applied to early Greek epic by Pucci (1987) and Tsagalis (2008).

[15] See Burkert (1992) and, with particular reference to the Presocratics, (2008); Murray (1993) 81–101; and, most fully, West (1997) (superseding his earlier work on the topic, West [1971]), though West's thesis of pervasive influence is convincingly modified by Metcalf (2015), whose study suggests influence only at certain points.

[16] Cited here as Mourelatos (2008a), a reprint with additional material.

our understanding of the philosophical claims embodied in these fragments by providing detailed intertextual readings that locate them within their broader cultural and literary contexts.[17] In its emphasis on form and literary context, the present book continues this trend. Although it is primarily intended as a work of literary history, it will also be relevant to historians of philosophy. But in contrast to those valuable contributions, it does not enlist literary aspects primarily in the service of elucidating the arguments. Instead, the philosophical claims are used to shed light on how these texts are designed to affect their audiences. Chapter 1 explores the function of Xenophanes' poetry in the context of his epistemological and theological claims; Chapter 2 looks at Parmenides' use of hexameters in light of his comments on the deceptiveness of mortal terminology; and Chapter 3 argues that Empedocles' poetry is designed, as Iamblichus' story illustrates, to have a purificatory function explicable in terms of his wider doctrines concerning the purity of Love and the pollution of Strife.

Underpinning this approach is an assumption that the texts in question are designed to afford experiences that are dependent on their unique phrasing. That is to say, they fulfil the criterion for poetry encapsulated in the New Critic Cleanth Brooks' 'heresy of paraphrase': an essential function would be lost in any prose summary of their content or themes.[18] In this respect, Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles are poets, not mere versifiers, and hence I shall occasionally refer to the three collectively as the 'Presocratic poets'. Of course, prose may also fulfil Brooks' criterion. As the fragments of Heraclitus amply demonstrate, literary prose, whilst still in its infancy in the sixth century BCE, could have a mystifying yet seductive impact on its readers, demanding a penetrating interpretation that is sensitive to details of phrasing.[19] But these sorts of effects were more typically assumed to be an essential aspiration of verse. It is telling that when Gorgias comes to argue that prose rhetoric irresistibly affects its audience in an emotional manner, he uses the paradigm of poetry to illustrate his point (D24=B11 §8–10): affective or symbolic prose, such as

[17] Trépanier (2004); Bryan (2012); Tor (2017). For Empedocles it has been harder for philosophical interpreters to ignore literary matters, but for particularly important applications note Graham (1988); Primavesi (2001), (2005), (2008a); Picot (2007), (2008a), (2008b); Picot and Berg (2015), (2018); Rashed (2018) (collecting the author's works on the topic), as well as n. 27 below.

[18] Brooks (1947) 192–214. Lamarque (2009a) 46 applies the principle to distinguish poetry from philosophy, on the grounds that no serious philosophical argument demands a unique phrasing. Lamarque's contrast is taken up by many contributors to a recent volume on the philosophy of poetry, Gibson (2015). Richards draws roughly the same distinction between 'emotive utterance' and 'scientific statement' (1970) 58.

[19] See the commentary of Kahn (1979) *passim* and, more recently, Vieira (2013).

the fragments of Heraclitus, is prose that is especially poetic. Poetry is habitually distinguished from prose, but in the sense of 'poetry' I am using, this is a false dichotomy. It would be more precise to speak of poeticity,[20] a quality that can be present in varying degrees in prose or verse, but which is more characteristically associated with the latter. In contending that these authors were poets, I mean that their work has a high degree of poeticity, a point that is not self-evident from the mere fact that they used verse.

This claim would perhaps be an obvious point if we were dealing with later poetry,[21] but it differs in focus from standard discussions of the Presocratic use of verse which explain the phenomenon in terms of wider cultural factors. Thus, it has been held that they chose the medium simply because prose did not exist at this stage as a viable means of widely publicising content, or because Ionian prose had not yet reached the Western Mediterranean, or because they wished to supplant the authority of Homer and Hesiod.[22] All these theories may well be valid. We know of a few prose books in the sixth century that may have been around at the time of Xenophanes and certainly would have been by the time of Parmenides and Empedocles,[23] but publicly performed verse-texts that were relatively easily memorised and transmitted could reach a far wider audience. The three poets did not operate independently of one another – there are close intertextual echoes of Xenophanes in Parmenides and of Parmenides in Empedocles – so that, in covering this subject matter in this medium, they may have constituted a particular tradition, one that was distinctive to the locale of Sicily and Southern Italy.[24] And they all feature allusions to Homer and Hesiod that seem to assert a correction of, or a progression over, those canonical predecessors.[25] But these explanations

[20] I take the term from Attridge (2019) 3.

[21] Cf. the abundant treatments of Lucretius as poetry, rather than purely as philosophy, of which West (1969) and Gale (1994) are worth singling out for their discussion of the interaction between his doctrinal content and unique form.

[22] No prose alternative: Havelock (1963) 294–5, 308 n. 38, (1983); Long (1985) 245; Osborne (1998); Western way: Wöhrle (1993) 179–80; supplanting authority: Jaeger (1947) 93; Detienne (1996) 130–7; Wright (1998) 6; Nightingale (2007) 190; Lesher (2008) 475–6 (who, however, acknowledges a plurality of possible functions). On the practicalities of literary production for the Presocratics, see Bernabé (1979); Patzer (2006).

[23] I.e., the prose works of Anaximander, Anaximenes, Pherecydes of Syros, Hecataeus and Heraclitus; possibly also the prose theogony of Akousilaos of Argos (see R. Fowler [2013] 623–4). On the Presocratics and early prose, see Laks (2001); Kahn (2003) 143–55; Patzer (2006) 95–158; Granger (2007) 412–17; and on early Greek prose more generally, Lilja (1968). For the dates of the Presocratics, see the relevant discussions in KRS.

[24] See Chapter 1 n. 119 and Chapter 3 Section 3.1 below.

[25] See the Presocratic scholarship cited at n. 13 above.

tell us little about the intended or actual responses of audiences. On the other hand, one group of interpreters who have taken this aspect seriously are those who, rejecting the philosophical label altogether, have argued that Parmenides and Empedocles used verse in order to induce a 'mystical experience' in their auditors.[26] I share the ambition to historicise the experiences of audiences, but as we shall see in Chapters 2 and 3, the evidence suggests a more mainstream performance context for these poems by rhapsodes at public festivals. The question of what responses these texts were designed to elicit is one that has rarely been asked and, consequently, has not been fully addressed.[27]

Moreover, the treatment of these authors as 'poets' and their work as 'literature' would appear to some to commit an egregious and problematic anachronism.[28] Certainly, as we are often reminded, what we habitually refer to as poetry during this period is more aptly labelled 'song', designated with vocabulary such as *aoide*, *humnos* and their cognates and, at least in many cases, vocalised melodically to an instrumental accompaniment.[29] It is performed before an audience, often in particular, ritualised circumstances, a very different phenomenon from the later practice of the private reading of poems.[30] The distinction is conceptual as well as practical: Greek songs, at least up until the latter part of the fifth century, tend to be evaluated in terms of their social utility and truthfulness; 'poetry' and 'literature' are closely bound up with notions of autotelic art and of fiction.[31] Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles, in using verse to present truth claims about the nature of the universe, might appear,

[26] Böhme (1986); Kingsley (1995), (1999), (2003); Gemelli Marciano (2008), (2013) relate the verse form of Parmenides and Empedocles to esoteric cults. A key influence on their approach is the classic article on Parmenides' proem, Burkert (1969).

[27] This is true even of Empedocles, the most recognised of the three for his literary merits, although more attention has been devoted to this aspect of his work, especially in francophone scholarship, starting with the learned but often impenetrable commentaries of Bollack (1965–9), (2003). See also van Groningen (1971); Gagné (2006); Rosenfeld-Löffler (2006); Gheerbrant (2017) for discussions of Empedocles' audience's experience. On Parmenides, Robbiano (2006) addresses the audience's experience but, to my mind, assumes too narrow a view of the hexameter genre. See n. 36 below. Regrettably, Leopoldo Irribaren's *Fabriquer le monde: technique et cosmogonie dans la poésie grecque archaïque* (Paris, 2018) reached me too late to be taken into consideration in the present study.

[28] The suitability of such terms is denied by Goldhill (1999); Ford (2003); and Gemelli Marciano (2008) 21–7; but for a defence of their usage, see Laird (2006) 25–30 and Maslov (2015) 9–22.

[29] It is only with Herodotus, in the later fifth century, that *poietes* and *poiesis* come into play. See Ford (2002) 131–57. On the singing of early Greek hexameter, see West (1981). On the 'song culture' of this period, see the influential studies of Herington (1985) and Gentili (1988).

[30] On this distinction, see Ford (2003).

[31] See esp. Ford (2002). The assumption of such a process underlies the influential studies of Herington (1985); Gentili (1988); and Nagy (1989).

above all, to exemplify the differences between early Greek song and later poetry.

Important though these distinctions are, they should not occlude the significant points of overlap between Archaic and Classical Greek conceptions of song on the one hand and later conceptions of the poetic and the literary on the other.[32] The Presocratic poets may conform to the tendency of early Greek song to advertise its truth status, but the truthfulness of song is always complicated by its emotive and immersive qualities,[33] features that would later be conceived as hallmarks of poetry and literature.[34] What is even more challenging to the traditional, philosophical approach to the Presocratic poets is the possibility that the 'truthfulness' of early Greek song is not restricted to its overt statements: the medium implicitly conveys a symbolic significance that lurks beneath the surface meaning. My understanding of this symbolic quality of early verse and the role it plays in an audience's experience warrants some elaboration.

2 Truth, Symbolism and Sublime Perspectives in Early Greek Song

In an oral culture, verse can serve as both a mnemonic and a means of publicity, so that poet-bards may be 'masters of truth', entrusted with preserving valued information about the past.[35] Whether the prominent association between verse and truth in surviving Greek examples represents a living continuation of this practice or a fossilised survival from the preliterate period, it is one reason for the Presocratics' use of the medium, though it does not exclude the possibility that they also chose it for its affective qualities.[36] Some scholars have insisted, on the grounds that 'fiction' is an alien concept to this sort of culture, that early Greek verse

[32] For recent attempts to identify features of poetry that endure from the earliest surviving Greek texts to modernity, see Culler (2015) (specifically on lyric) and Attridge (2019) (more generally).

[33] As Halliwell (2011) 36–92 argues at length of Homer.

[34] For immersiveness in both ancient Greek poetics and modern conceptions of the literary, see Allan et al. (2017); note also Halliwell (2002) on the related concept of *mimesis*. For emotional affectivity, see e.g. Verdenius (1983) 46–53; Laird (2006) 26–30; Halliwell (2011) *passim*; Attridge (2015) 259–79, (2019) 11–54.

[35] See Detienne (1996); Rösler (1980) 289–93; Puelma (1989) 72–3; Thomas (1992) 113–17; Finkelberg (1998) 73–88; and, more generally, Finnegan (1977) 208.

[36] Puelma (1989) 76–7 sees Parmenides and Empedocles as developing the Hesiodic tradition of conveying physical and ethical truths in poetry, as opposed to Homer's historical truth claims. Robbiano (2006) 35–60 argues that Parmenides' audience would have expected to hear 'something true and of great importance' (42) of a hexameter poem, but not all passages of hexameter poetry fit this description (cf. Demodocus' song of Ares and Aphrodite at *Od.* 8.266–366; the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*) and, in any case, the association with truth does not rule out stereotypically pleasurable, emotional and engrossing aspects of the medium. See further Halliwell (2011) 55 and n. 37 below.

can only mean exactly what it states overtly,[37] but this is too restrictive. The 'truth' of a narrative need not be limited to its bare factual details.[38] This principle is already recognised in Aristotle's argument that poetry is more 'philosophical' (φιλοσοφώτερον) than history since it does not simply report what happened but tells a story which ideally conforms to the rules of probability or necessity (*Poet.* 9. 1451a36–b7). On this view, a poetic narrative should follow real patterns of human behaviour, such as how a certain type of person would react to a certain type of situation, and it may achieve this irrespective of whether it portrays events which actually happened.[39] In other words, the truth of a narrative may reside not exclusively – or even not at all – in its correspondence to actual events, but may also encompass the accuracy of the patterns of behaviour it instantiates.

There are good reasons for thinking that this sort of conception of poetic truth was familiar to the Archaic period. In the *Works and Days*, the narrator promises to declaim ἐτήτυμα, 'true things', to Perses (*Op.* 10) then proceeds to recount two myths – of Prometheus and Pandora and of the Races – which are ostensibly incompatible with one another, but which contain deep interconnections on a thematic level: both are occupied with work and justice, both describe a fall from a better state to a worse and warn of the human potential for disaster.[40] It is left for Perses and the audience to work out how these stories fit together, a process that mirrors on an intellectual level the physical labour that must be performed to access the means of life that is so prominently 'hidden' in the poem (*Op.* 42). Even if we assume that, on some level, Hesiod believed in the historicity of these stories, their 'truth' extends, beyond their factual content, to the wider themes they convey.[41]

[37] Most (1999) 339, 342–3; Gemelli Marciano (2008) 25–6. Finkelberg (1998) recognises that truth and fiction are not necessarily mutually exclusive (21) but argues that early Greek hexameter poetry was overwhelmingly valued for its historicity. For criticisms of this view, see Pratt (1993); Bowie (1993); and Halliwell (2011) 36–92.

[38] Pratt (1993) 1–9, 36–7; Halliwell (2011) 7. In modern philosophy, Lewis (1978) influentially argued for the applicability of the concept of truth to aspects of fictional worlds (such as its themes or morals) that go beyond the strict statements of the text and stimulated a range of responses which, though critical of the details of his argument, still broadly accept this principle. See e.g. Pavel (1986) esp. 144–5; G. Currie (1986), (1990) 52–91; Gibson (2009) *contra* e.g. Doležel (1980), (2010) 41–4.

[39] This point is unaffected by the dispute over whether Aristotle here assumes that poetry should produce new knowledge of these 'universals' in the audience (thus Halliwell [2002] 193–206, partly on the basis of 4.1448b4–1449a31) or whether it should appeal to knowledge the audience already possesses (thus Heath [1991] 399; see also Heath [2009]).

[40] B. Currie (2012) 53; Canevaro (2015) 151. Ledbetter (2003) 51 makes a similar point on the didactic function of the *Theogony*. Krischer (1965) 172–3 and Halliwell (2011) 18 n. 37 argue that ἐτήτυμος differs from ἀληθής in referring to normative or didactic truth rather than narrative accuracy.

[41] On such 'abstracted thematic content' as inherent to poetry, see Lamarque (2009a) 39–50.

Theorists have sometimes complained that such 'thematic' truths purportedly conveyed by literature are often trivial or banal when spelled out.[42] One waggish commentator suggests that this approach reduces *Pride and Prejudice* to the simple statement that 'Stubborn pride and ignorant prejudice keep attractive people apart.'[43] An analogous complaint would be applicable to Hesiod if we were to suggest that the essential purpose of the myths is just to claim that life is tough and we should be just and reverent to the gods. But of course, this is not all that they do. Whilst some of these 'thematic truths' may be uncontroversial, it is hard to boil them down to a definite set. Hesiod's myths say something about justice and man's relationship to the gods, but also something about gender relations, about the belatedness of mortals' current situation, about where the responsibility lies for mortal tribulations and so on. The myths serve a specific rhetorical purpose (to persuade Perses to act justly and work), but they do not fulfil that purpose simply by encoding a singular 'moral' that the addressee is to identify. Perses is not supposed to extract a finite number of thematic truths after which he may safely forget the myths. Their indeterminacy is part of the point: he is to mull them over, exploring the various possible senses they may convey and their relevance to his situation. The same could be said of the parenetic myths in the *Iliad*. The story of the Litai and Meleager (9.434–605) is not reducible to the simple point that Achilles should accept Agamemnon's reparations, and the myth of Niobe (24.699–720) does not only make the banal point that Priam, though he grieves, still needs to eat; it invites reflection on the vicissitudes of mortal blessings and the endurance of human resilience in the face of overwhelming calamity, in light of which Priam is to change his behaviour. In this sense, the myths are symbolic rather than allegorical. They do not have a definite tenor to be decoded; their symbolic significance is to be explored and discovered.[44]

These specific examples of embedded myths are instances of the way in which Muse-inspired hexameter poetry in general was often assumed to harbour such symbolic meanings. Its characteristic content is mythological, and myths occupy a space outside the limits of contemporary mortal experience, which is why their mortal narrators typically require the assistance of divine Muses. They take place in the remote past, prior to

[42] See Stolnitz (1992) and the overview of Lamarque (2009b) 238–9. [43] Stolnitz (1992) 193.

[44] For this distinction between allegory and symbol, see Norman Friedman's entry for 'Symbol' in the *Princeton Encyclopedia of Poetry and Poetics* (4th ed. 2012), and the discussions of Gadamer (2004) 61–70, (1986) 31–9 and de Man (1983) 187–208. For ancient practices of symbolic interpretation, which go back at least as far the sixth century BCE, see Struck (2004).

recorded memory, or they concern the behaviour of the gods who inhabit the inaccessible locations of Mount Olympus or Tartarus and who interact with the familiar world in a manner that is normally invisible to mortals. The details of these stories were consequently up for debate. Early hexameter poets could baldly deny rival mythological accounts (e.g. *hHymn* 1.1–7) or reject them on *a priori* grounds (e.g. Hes. *Op.* 11–12).[45]

Equally, interpreters of hexameter poems could debate the relevance of the myths to present-day realities, applying elaborate explanations as to their true significance.[46] Pherecydes of Syros (*fl. c.* 544 BCE), in a testimony that derives from the second-century CE philosopher Celsus, is said to have understood Zeus's threatening words to Hera (*Il.* 1.590–1, 15.18–24) as the creator-god imposing order on matter (R27<B5).[47] According to Porphyry (*ap.* Schol. B *ad Il.* 20.67), Theagenes of Rhegium defended Homer against accusations of impiety on the grounds that the *Theomachia* does not in fact represent a battle of anthropomorphic deities, but rather a cosmology of opposing elements, in which the dry battles the wet, the hot the cold and the light the heavy.[48] Late though these sources are, they present a picture of sixth-century BCE interpretative practices which roughly coheres with the impression we get of the better-evidenced fifth and fourth centuries. Aristophanes, Plato and Xenophon attest to conceptions of poetry as *ainigmata*, 'riddles', that contain *hypo-* or *dianoiai*, 'hidden meanings'.[49] One of the most famous such interpreters, Metrodorus of Lampsacus, is reported as having understood Homer's characters as representing the celestial bodies: Achilles is the sun, Helen the earth and Hector the moon (Tatian 21=DK61A3), so that Achilles' pursuit of Hector around the walls of Troy becomes the orbit of the Sun and the Moon around the Earth.[50] But our most extensive Classical-period evidence for the methods involved in this sort of interpretation comes from the fourth-century BCE Derveni papyrus. This charred scroll preserves a fragmentary commentary,

[45] See Feeney (1991) 13. This point undermines the view of Detienne (1996) 49, 52–67 and González (2013) 201–17, 235–66 that Archaic Greek audiences would have regarded hexameter performances as 'tautologically true, necessarily accurate' (González [2013] p. 211). For an argument that epic is always inherently allegorical (in a broad sense), see Laird (2003) 165–73.

[46] For this and the subsequent two paragraphs, I am heavily indebted to the important study of Struck (2004).

[47] Tate (1927) identified the significance of this testimony for Pherecydes as an allegorist. Schibli (1990) 99–100 is more sceptical of that possibility. Struck (2004) 26–7 n. 14 sees Schibli as 'overly cautious' on this point.

[48] On Theagenes, see also the Epilogue below.

[49] E.g. Aristophanes, *Pax* 38–51; Plato *Ion* 530d, *Resp.* II 378d; Xenophon *Symp.* III. 6.

[50] Under the assumption, of course, of a geocentric universe. For this interpretation of Metrodorus, see Richardson (1975) 69, with further references.

thought to date from the fifth century BCE, on an earlier theogony ascribed to Orpheus.[51] The commentator describes the poem as 'riddling, even if Orpheus himself intended by means of it to say not undeterminable riddles, but rather great things in the form of riddles' (Col. 7.5–6, text and trans. LM).[52] He then proceeds to identify Olympus with Time (Col. 12), and Zeus with the air (Col. 17).

In all these examples, the significance of a hexameter poem is taken to go far beyond its strict, semantic meaning. Zeus is not just Zeus, and the battle of the gods is not just a battle. Though these interpreters are standardly referred to as 'allegorists', their conception of poems as *ainigmata* is broader than the later allegorical label implies: 'riddling' texts can convey their hidden meanings through strategies other than allegory in the strict sense of an extended metaphor. Thus, the Derveni commentator understands the word ἄδυτον – which ostensibly means 'shrine' in the context of the poem – in its homonymous sense of 'unsetting' (Col. 11.1–4; see LSJ *s.v.* I 2). The term, by means of a pun, reveals a cosmological point about Night, who, in the theogony, inhabits the shrine. The commentator also ingeniously unpicks the name 'Kronos' as indicating the 'mind that strikes' or 'makes things collide' (Col. 14. 7, κρούοντα τὸν Νοῦν) during the formation of the cosmos.[53] Though these particular interpretations are hardly convincing to modern readers, the strategy of exploring the deeper significance of particular terms, through identifying resemblances to other vocabulary and analysing instances of wordplay, would today be regarded as a legitimate hermeneutical procedure.[54] Hexameter poetry, with its typically mythological subject matter, seems to invite this sort of attempt to identify an underlying significance through close analysis of particular details.

Figures such as Theagenes, Metrodorus and the Derveni commentator may be extreme cases, whose interpretations are ridiculed or regarded as implausible by near-contemporary sources, but the general idea that

[51] On the background and interpretation of this difficult text, see especially Betegh (2004) and Piano (2016), along with the collections Laks and Most (1997), Papadopoulou and Muellner (2014) and Santamaría (2018). The papyrus was first discovered in 1962 and was made available to scholarship at large in an anonymous, unofficial edition on separately numbered pages in *ZPE* 47 (1982) (for the story of this peculiar development, see Burkert [2014] 113–14), but its official *editio princeps* did not appear until Kouremenos, Parássoglou and Tsantsanoglou (2006).

[52] αἰνι[γμ]ατώδης, [κε]ὶ [Ὀρφεὺ]ς αὐτ[ὸ]ς [ἀό]ριστ' αἰν[ίγμα]τα οὐκ ἤθελε λέγειν, [ἐν αἰν]ίγμασ̣[ι]ν δὲ [μεγ]άλα.

[53] On this cosmological process, see Betegh (2004) 252–7.

[54] On how the practices of the commentator compare with later literary criticism, see Henry (1986); Struck (2004) 29–39; Betegh (2004) 132–5; Bierl (2014).

hexameter poems communicate profound truths in a manner that goes beyond their straightforward semantic meaning was widespread in the Classical period and already implicit in the poems themselves.[55] In the much-discussed Muse-inspiration scene of Hesiod's *Theogony*, an episode that would be adapted by Xenophanes and Parmenides,[56] the Muses 'inspire' (ἐνέπνευσαν) a 'divine voice' (αὐδὴν/ θέσπιν) in the singer so that he may glorify 'the things that shall be and the things that were before' (τά τ'ἐσσόμενα πρό τ'ἐόντα), and order him to sing of the 'race of blessed ones who always are' (μακάρων γένος αἰὲν ἐόντων, 31–3). The expression here translated as 'divine voice' implies that they do not merely affect the content, but also the sound and timbre of the utterance,[57] in such a manner as to render it more appropriate for the contemplation of the eternal entities that will form Hesiod's main subject matter.[58] Regardless of whether we should imagine the Muses as telling Hesiod truths, lies like the truth, or some combination of the two (*Theog.* 27–8),[59] the mortal narrator presents his speech as prophetic – he is to glorify not only events of the past but also 'things that shall be', an expression elsewhere used of the Iliadic prophet Calchas (*Il.* 1.70)[60] – and divinatory speech, by such strategies as ambiguity, vagueness and metaphor, characteristically demands a penetrating interpretation to uncover its truths.[61] In this respect, the deeper truths of divinatory speech resemble the gods themselves, who can never really be understood with certainty by mortals or adequately encapsulated in everyday language.[62] The 'divine' quality of the

[55] The passages cited at n. 49 are all critical or satirical of this type of interpretation, but see Struck (2004) 39–50, who cites several Socratic dialogues that indicate how widespread it was.

[56] See the discussion of Xenophanes D50=B35 at Chapter 1, Section 2a and of Parmenides D8.65=B8.60 at Chapter 2, Section 3a below.

[57] On these lines see Lanata (1963) 26–8. On the vocabulary see *LfgrE s.v.*; West (1966) *ad loc.*; and Ford (1992) 184–5. The expression is also used of the bards in the *Odyssey* (1.328, 8.498).

[58] See Ford (1992) 185 and Halliwell (2011) 67.

[59] On this perennial interpretative crux, see the recent and thorough discussion of Tor (2017) 61–103.

[60] Cf. also Pind. *Pae.* 8.83–5=fr. 52i. Nagy (1989) 23–9 argues, largely on the basis of the Hesiod passage, that poetry and prophecy were indistinguishable in a period prior to our surviving texts, an idea that has some ancient precedents (e.g. Paus. 10.5.7; cf. Pl. *Ion* 534b). See, similarly, Dodds (1951) 81; González (2013) 284–8. Finnegan (1977) 207–10 criticises the once-popular view that *all* oral poets are essentially seers or prophets.

[61] On these strategies, see Manetti (1993) 24–9. This feature is more famous from oracular, rather than prophetic, speech, above all in the hexameter oracles recorded by Herodotus, but as McNelis and Sens (2016) 22 point out, prophecy and oracle are regularly conflated (e.g. of Cassandra's prophecies at Aesch. *Ag.* 1178 and Lycoph. *Alex.* 6).

[62] On inscrutability of gods as a fundamental feature of religion (in spite of confident assertions of insiders to the contrary), see Burkert (1996) 4–8. For neat expressions on the inscrutability of the gods in antiquity, note Protagoras D10=B4; Ptolemy *Syntaxis* 1.1. See also Parker (1999) on Sophocles. On the difficulties of encapsulating the divine in mortal language, note Price (1984) 80. The imperfection of mortal language may also be implicit in the traditional notion that the gods

singer's voice thus points to its capacity to connect the audience with that which would normally be ineffable. Hesiod's song implicitly opens a channel to the divine, eternal entities it concerns, in a society where gods, though latently ubiquitous, were rarely thought to be encountered directly.

I shall argue that Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles conform to this conception of the 'truth' of Archaic Greek poetry as something that extends to its range of symbolic significance and is embodied in its form as well as its semantic content.[63] If this is correct, the use of verse performs at least two uncontroversially philosophical functions that would be overlooked by an exclusive emphasis on explicit propositional content. First, verse form, in combination with the other assorted resources of poetry, implies claims that are not made overtly; and secondly, it serves to draw the audience into a process of enquiry, for instance, by inviting reflection on the true significance of the words uttered and their relationship to their referents.

More provocatively, there is a further way of thinking of the 'truth' of Archaic Greek poetry that transcends its propositional content, whether overt or implied. It is sometimes held that poetry or literature, as a form of art, is essentially concerned with a kind of truth that is *sui generis* and cannot be expressed in propositional form. This idea is familiar from the Romantic notion that 'Beauty is truth, truth beauty.'[64] Poetry may stem from and convey 'true feeling', that is, an experience that is 'true' in the sense of 'sincere' or 'authentic'.[65] It is worth noting that one influential version of this view is indebted to the Presocratic poets themselves. Martin Heidegger argued that art is 'a becoming and happening of truth' and the 'essence of art is poetry'.[66] He conceived of truth, following the etymology of *aletheia*, as 'unconcealment', a conception that was inspired in large part by his reading of Parmenides.[67] Heidegger's symbolic interpretations of the Presocratics are of limited value for a study such as this one which aims

speak a separate language from humans, on which see Versnel (2011) 389 n. 26 and Chapter 2, n. 19 below.

[63] This argument is given more support if a recent suggestion by Richard Janko (2016) is correct, that the Derveni papyrus quotes Parmenides D4=B1.1. The suggestion, however, is highly speculative, since it rests on the identification of only seven letters.

[64] Cf. Wordsworth's 'poetry is the first and last of all knowledge' in the 1802 preface to *Lyrical Ballads*, Wordsworth and Coleridge (2005) 302.

[65] Thus, recently, Scruton (2015) 157–8, who also identifies this view in the work of T. S. Eliot and F. R. Leavis. Cf. Eliot's famous criticism of *Hamlet* on the grounds that it lacks an objective correlative that authentically conveys Hamlet's emotions (1920).

[66] Heidegger (2002) 44, 47. [67] See Heidegger (1962) 256–7, (1992).

at a historical understanding of the ancient philosophers,[68] though it should be acknowledged that the approach he inaugurated was a key influence on Mourelatos' *Route*, one of the few interpretations to take Parmenides' forms and imagery seriously. Furthermore, his conception of truth as a mysterious revelation seems closer than the truths of propositional logic to the extraordinary, emotive utterances of divinely inspired Archaic Greek song.[69]

Now, some may object that experiences of literature are neither true nor untrue in any useful sense of the terms – Frege, for instance, famously argued that poetry and fiction lack truth value on the grounds that their function does not depend on their accurate reference to actual facts.[70] Or it may be the case that authentic feelings can in fact be adequately expressed as propositions after all.[71] It is far beyond my scope to pronounce a verdict on these issues. But however we ought to conceive of truth in general, there is one common conception of *sui generis* literary truth that seems particularly applicable to early Greek poetry. This is the idea that truth is an essential value of literature, in the way in which it exposes a particular vision of the world.[72] According to this theory, we do not necessarily learn that the factual details or thematic truths of a literary text are valid, but we learn what it is like to see the world in a certain way. As Hilary Putnam has written of Celine's *Journey to the End of the Night*, 'I do not learn that love does not exist, that all human beings are hateful and hating . . . What I learn is to see the world as it looks to someone who is sure that hypothesis is correct.'[73] Following this line of thought, in the *Works and Days*, Perses is shown that it is possible to view the world in such a manner that his laziness and deceptiveness constitute a lack of foresight that is likely to be punished in the long term. As a result of being granted this experience, his repertoire of ways of looking at things is expanded and he may end up changing his

[68] See Detienne (1996) 26–8; Most (2002); and now Lecznar (2020) 117–29, who charts the relationship between Heidegger's use of the Presocratics and his Nazism.

[69] See Cole (1983) on the relationship between Heidegger's understanding of *aletheia* and its sense in Archaic Greek texts. On the ethical character of Greek poetic 'truth', see Detienne (1996) 49, 52–67; Robbiano (2006) 43–8; González (2013) 201–17, 235–66. Though I am sceptical of their assumption that Archaic Greek audiences would necessarily have granted the authority arrogated by poets in Muse-inspiration scenes (see n. 45 above), such scenes, at least within the fiction of the poetry, clearly imbue the statements uttered with a symbolic and religious character.

[70] Frege (1960) 62–4. For criticisms of this argument and an overview of its legacy in literary scholarship, see Doležel (1998) 3–5.

[71] For comments along these lines, note Lamarque (2009b) 239–48.

[72] E.g. Murdoch (1970) 34; Putnam (1978) 83–94; Novitz (1987) 135; Gibson (2009); Koethe (2009) 58; G. Currie (2010) 88–93. See Lamarque (2009b) 239–48 for an overview (though I conflate here two categories he distinguishes as 'vision' and 'learning what it is like').

[73] Putnam (1978) 89–90.

own habitual attitudes. Of course, this visual language of 'seeing' or 'viewing' from a certain 'perspective' is metaphorical for the essentially cognitive processes of 'interpreting' or 'understanding', but such conceptual metaphors are as prevalent in Greek as they are in English, for instance, in the fact that οἶδα is in origin a perfect tense of a verb of seeing and in the fact that νοέω, in Homer, usually refers to a perceptual process of 'noticing' or 'recognising' a character or situation.[74]

This perspectival conception of literary truth fits neatly with the Archaic Greek emphasis on the vivid, visual quality of verse. Within this context, vision and truth are intimately related. Before the lengthy catalogue of ships, the Iliadic poet requests the Muses' assistance on the grounds that they 'are goddesses and present at and know all things' (ὑμεῖς γὰρ θεαί ἐστε πάρεστέ τε ἴστέ τε πάντα, 2.485). As is often observed, 'to know' something in Homer is typically (though not always) to have seen it,[75] so that the Muses' divine knowledge (arising as a consequence of their 'presence') is empirical. The narrator's aim here, then, is to replicate their knowledgeable divine perspective on the innumerable Greek ships and warriors through song. A further example is the *Odyssey*'s account of the bard, Demodocus, who implicitly enjoys god-given powers of vision when it is mentioned that the 'Muse loved him above all, and she gave him both good and bad;/ she deprived him of his eyes, but she gave him sweet song' (*Od.* 8.63–4): song replaces his ability to see, so that he 'shows his song' (φαῖνε δ' ἀοιδήν, *Od.* 8.499) and is able to recount, in an uncannily accurate manner, events of which he has no experience, as Odysseus' praise confirms (*Od.* 8.487–91). A wealth of ancient and modern Homeric criticism regards this visual quality as extending to the audience's experience of the song: they are made to feel like spectators.[76] It is because of this immersive quality that song can cause its audience to forget their immediate concerns (*Theog.* 80–7, 98–103).

[74] See studies of von Fritz (1943), (1945), (1946) and Lesher (1981) 8–16. The metaphor is also implicit in the tendency for blindness to be compensated for by enhanced insight in Greek myth (most notably in Teiresias and Oedipus), on which see Buxton (1980). On 'Understanding/Knowing is Seeing' as a pervasive conceptual metaphor, at least in English, see Lakoff and Johnson (1980) 48, 103; Kövecses (2010) 256–7.

[75] The key study is Snell (1924), though he overstates his case. See Lesher (1981) 8–15, (2008) 459–64 and Hussey (1990) 11–17.

[76] See Ford (1992) 53–4; Bakker (2005) 62–8; Clay (2011b); Graziosi (2013); Allan et al. (2017); Grethlein and Huitink (2017); Gazis (2018) 1–13. For the term in ancient criticism, see Zanker (1981); Meijering (1987) 29–52; Nünlist (2009) 194–8. A good example is ΣbT *Il.*23. 363–72, discussed by Grethlein and Huitink.

When the best performances of Greek songs enable audiences to 'see' the content, this is an assumption of a 'perspective' not only in the visual sense of the term but also in the sense of seeing the world 'in a certain way'. So much is clear from the emotional dimension to this experience, as described in our most detailed testimony for rhapsodic performance, Plato's *Ion*. The rhapsode Ion assents to Socrates' suggestion that his soul believes it is present at the actions it describes (535b–c), resulting in the display of appropriate emotions: 'whenever I say something pitiable (ἐλεινόν), my eyes are full of tears; whenever it is something frightening or awful (φοβερὸν ἢ δεινόν), my hair stands on end with fear and my heart leaps' (535c). The same emotions are then replicated in the audience (535e).[77] The perspective that Ion adopts and exposes to his audience is not value-neutral, but entails certain attitudes, for instance, that a certain event is worthy of fear.[78] This axiological dimension can shed light on the rhetorical function of parenetic myths: after hearing Hesiod's stories of Prometheus and Pandora and of the Races, Perses will ideally be able to evaluate his actions from a wider, more global perspective, according to which work is necessary and dishonest gains count as a lack of foresight with potentially disastrous consequences. The Presocratic poets, I shall suggest, deploy verse to impart 'truths' in this manner, that is, not explicitly articulated propositional claims, but ways of experiencing the world which, from their perspective, are more appropriate to its true nature.

One aesthetic concept which, in some formulations, involves this perspectival understanding of literary truth and which, I shall argue, applies to the intended effects of Parmenides' and Empedocles' poetry is the sublime. Longinus – a name I use here for convenience while remaining agnostic over the authorship of the literary treatise preserved under it –[79] uses visual language for the experience of both composers and recipients of literature. He discusses at length the poet's powers of 'visualisation' (φαντασία) which are conducive to sublimity (§15). More generally, in §35, the sublime is made possible by the fact that 'godlike' (ἰσόθεοι) writers have 'seen' (εἶδον) something: namely, that nature has 'judged' mortals to be 'spectators' (θεαταί) as well as competitors in her games, with a passion for whatever is great and more divine than ourselves, so that the whole universe is insufficient for the 'contemplation' – or, more literally, the 'viewing' (θεωρία) – of human thought and our ideas often transcend the

[77] Note similarly Gorgias D24=B11.9.
[78] On literature's perspective as never value-neutral, see Gibson (2009) 481.
[79] Heath (1999) argues that *On the Sublime* is in fact by the third-century CE philosopher Cassius Longinus, against the general consensus of recent scholarship.

boundaries of the cosmos (§35.2–3).[80] In sublime communication, the listeners share in the emotions felt by the authors who have achieved a perspective that goes beyond normal mortal limitations (§39.3). For Longinus, this experience has a veridical dimension: there is no suggestion that the perspective acquired by great authors is in any way invalid or fallacious. Indeed, in the introduction to the treatise, he endorses the saying that we have 'beneficence' (εὐεργεσία) and 'truth' (ἀλήθεια) in common with the gods (§1.2–3) and, given that he frequently uses divine language for great writers, we may assume that they are the ones who most of all possess these two qualities.[81] As Stephen Halliwell has argued at length, the truth of the Longinian sublime is not, or at least not exclusively, propositional, since it encompasses direct contact with greatness of mind (§9), authenticity of the emotions conveyed (cf. §22.1) and the grand cosmic spectatorship described in §35.[82]

Longinus' treatise is of Imperial date, but its conception of divine, transcendent poetic truth has its roots in much earlier poetic and rhetorical practice.[83] It is arguably an expansion and elaboration of the powers of song already vaunted in Hesiod's *Theogony* where, as we saw, the Muses do not simply affect the factual content of the verse but also its form and emotional impact. A neat expression of the grandeur of contemplation that would come to be associated with the sublime is made by the Hellenistic philosopher-poet, Cleanthes:

> τοῦ λ̣[ό]γου τοῦ τῆς φιλοσοφίας ἱκανῶς̣ μὲν ἐξαγγέλλειν δυναμένου τὰ θεῖα καὶ ἀνθ[ρ̣]ώ[πι]ν̣[α], μὴ ἔχοντ̣ος δὲ ψειλοῦ τῶν θείων μεγεθῶν λέξεις οἰκείας, τὰ μέτρα καὶ τὰ μέλη καὶ τοὺς ῥυθμοὺς ὡς μάλιστα προσικνεῖσθαι πρὸς τὴν ἀλήθειαν τῆς τῶν θείων θεωρίας
>
> Though the discourse of philosophy has a sufficient capacity to make known divine and human affairs, since it is stripped down, it does not possess the aspects of speech appropriate for divine grandeurs, that is, epic and lyric verses, as well as the rhythms which above all approach the truth of contemplation of divine matters. (Cleanthes *SVF* 1.486 *ap.* Philodemus *de musica* 4 Col. 142)[84]

[80] For τοῦ περιέχοντος here as 'the boundary' of the cosmos, see Halliwell (2011) 343 n. 35.

[81] The saying is variously attributed to Pythagoras (Ael. *VH* 12.59), Demosthenes, Aristotle and others (*Sent. Vat.* P.26 Sternbach). For divine language of great writers, in addition to the example at §35.2 note §4.6; §18.1; §32.5; §33.5; and the comparison with the Pythian oracle at §13.2. For truth as an aesthetic quality in Longinus, note also the approving quotation of Pl. *Resp.* 9.586A at §13.1.

[82] See Halliwell (2011) 343–67. Porter (2016) 76 argues that that this view 'naively' overlooks Longinus' emphasis on concealed literary artifice, but the two seem to me to be compatible: literary artifice may bring about the three effects Halliwell outlines.

[83] On the long prehistory of the features Longinus identifies as Sublime, see Porter (2016).

[84] Translation adapted from the French of Delattre (2007), who defends these interpretations of παραδείγματα and τὰ μέτρα καὶ τὰ μέλη *ad loc.*

For Cleanthes, it is not merely the semantic content of the verse that is meaningful, but also its metres and rhythms; it does not simply provide an accurate account of the gods, but somehow reaches towards a 'truth' which here seems to refer not so much to the particular theological claims made as to the experience of 'contemplating' or 'viewing' them, something which could not be replicated by philosophical prose.[85] As I hope to show in subsequent chapters, this description would be peculiarly apt for Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles. They do not use verse simply to communicate a finite number of doctrinal claims, but to provide an experience of what it feels like to view the world from a particular, value-laden perspective, one that transcends normal mortal limitations and exposes an otherwise unrecognised spectrum of truths.

3 Poetics

The process of bringing these texts further into the fold of Greek literary studies helps to generate new interpretations of particular details but can also affect our understanding of the broader history of Greek poetics. Xenophanes' criticisms of Homer and Hesiod (D8–9=B11–12) occupy an important place in any account of the topic, but studies tend to treat them briefly and in isolation from his wider cosmological and epistemological claims.[86] Chapter 1, accordingly, offers a reassessment of these criticisms in the context of Xenophanes' wider philosophy, arguing against the view that they stem from a literal-minded failure to appreciate any value in made-up stories. Rather, when read within the context of his comments on the gods, human knowledge and human progress, it appears that it is not so much Homer and Hesiod's inaccuracy as their morally pernicious influence on society that is the problem. But in addition to this well-known example, the Presocratic poets' cosmological, theological and epistemological doctrines have further implications for the theory and practice of poetry. The goddess of Parmenides' poem apparently espouses a strict monism which renders inaccurate almost all human language.[87] These linguistic consequences are underlined by her emphasis on the mortals' act of *naming* in forming their erroneous opinions (D8.58=B8.52; D13=B9.1; D62=B19.3). If mortal language is erroneous in this way, then,

[85] Cleanthes' comment is strikingly similar to those of modern scholars cited at n. 58 above.

[86] E.g. Atkins (1934) 13–15; Grube (1965) 8–9; Pfeiffer (1968) 8–9; Russell (1981) 19, 87–8; Nagy (1989) 34–5; Too (1998) 119–20; Halliwell (2011) 10. Svenbro (1984) 79–100 and Ford (2002) 46–66 are exceptions, with more substantial treatments of Xenophanes.

[87] See Graeser (1977) 362–5; Kraus (1987) 81–97; Mason (1988).

a fortiori, so is mortal-authored earlier Greek poetry. Empedocles, on the other hand, valorises poets, placing them at a high grade in the cycle of reincarnations (D39=B146). The fact that these authors themselves employ the medium of verse should encourage us to explore these consequences of their philosophy for poetry in general.

More subtly, Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles imply views about the nature and function of poetry through their own poetic practice. 'One function of the poet at any time is to discover by his own thought and feeling what seems to him to be the poetry at that time. Ordinarily he will disclose what he finds in his own poetry by way of the poetry itself.'[88] We need not exclude the Presocratic poets from this principle simply because they also belong to the history of philosophy. A nuanced exploration of the significance of the forms, images and vocabulary deployed, within the context of the Greek literary tradition, can reveal the 'immanent' poetics of these texts.[89] When Parmenides' goddess refers to her account of mortal opinions as a 'deceptive *kosmos* of my words' (κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλόν, D8.57=B8.52), she uses a conventional expression that is elsewhere used to mark speech as sung verse.[90] These parallels suggest that Parmenides' use of the phrase has poetological implications: the world of deceptive mortal opinions is presented as a world of poetic artistry; conversely, poetry itself is implicitly painted as the product of opinion. Empedocles' poetry is a rich source of poetological imagery.[91] We have already seen that his song is presented as a purifying liquid, but there is also further evidence for the sort of response that his poetry is designed to elicit. His narrator responds to the progress of the cosmic cycle in aesthetic terms, when describing the creation of mortal things as a 'wonder to behold' (θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι, D75=B35.17), a formulaic expression which elsewhere is almost always used of products of craftsmanship.[92] The expression therefore illustrates that in Empedocles' poem, the perceptible world itself is the product of craftsmanship, designed by Love and Strife at different stages in the cycle.[93] The simile of the painters (D60=B23), in which the formation of a pluralistic world from only four elements is likened to the process of painting a variety of objects with only a limited number of paints, draws an

[88] Stevens (1951) vii, also quoted by Ford (1992) 3–4.
[89] This expression in this sense was, I believe, coined by Blumenberg (1966); it has been applied to early Greek literature by Nünlist (1998) 10, and specifically to the poetry of Parmenides and Empedocles by Most (1999) 335–6.
[90] Esp. Solon fr. 1.2 W and Democritus D221=B21, but cf. also *Od.* 8.489, *Bacch.* 59, Simon. 11.23 W, 22.6 W, Pind. *Ol.* 11.13, fr. 194.3, *OF* 25.
[91] Note the frequent references in Nünlist (1998).
[92] See the discussion at Chapter 3, Section 3 below.
[93] See Sedley (2007) 31–74.

analogy between the perceptible world and artistic production. This analogy between artwork and the cosmos, coupled with the fact that the cosmos itself is Empedocles' main topic, encourages us to see his text as the product of craftsmanship, and as having the same wondrous effect as the phenomena it describes.

It is surprising, then, that Parmenides and Empedocles are omitted in most accounts of the history of Greek poetics, whilst Xenophanes is given only cursory treatment.[94] The Epilogue of this book sketches out in brief some striking instances of direct influence by the Presocratic poets on the literary ideas of certain crucial fifth- and fourth-century BCE thinkers on the subject, in particular, Metrodorus of Lampsacus, Antisthenes, Gorgias, Democritus and Plato. In view of these instances, I shall argue that the Presocratic poets were instrumental in the movement towards an explicit articulation of what may be termed the Classical conception of poetry, according to which poems are self-contained artefacts, crafted by mortals, that present true claims only symbolically. The seeds of such a notion are already traceable in Archaic song, in examples of hexameter ecphrasis and in Simonides' famous comparison between poetry and painting (*ap*. Plut. *Mor*. 346 f). But it is only with Plato that we find an explicit and systematic argument that both verbal texts and visual arts are united in offering a depiction of the world. Similarly, the notion that the poet can encode true claims symbolically in the text is implicit in several passages of early Greek poetry, such as the paradigmatic myths in Homer. But it is only later, in the context of allegorical commentators, that (as far as we can reconstruct their practices from surviving fragments and the charred remains of the Derveni papyrus) we find an explicit statement of the idea that the poet encodes fundamental truths throughout the text and it is the task of the interpreter to recover them.[95] The Eleatic claim that the objects of secure knowledge are fundamentally unchanging facilitated the suggestion that poetry symbolically represents, and should be judged in relation to, such objects.

[94] Of the studies cited at n. 86 above, only Ford (2002) briefly mentions Parmenides and Empedocles, in respect of the role played in the movement towards a conception of materialism, that paved the way for Democritus and Gorgias' materialist conceptions of song and poetic inspiration (161–5). Maehler (1963) and Ledbetter (2003) make no mention of the Presocratics. Heath (2013), a concise survey of ancient philosophical poetics, features brief references to Xenophanes and Parmenides (6–8), but largely begins with Plato. The selection, with commentary, of Lanata (1963), and the introductory discussion of Harriott (1969) 65–7, are exceptions to this trend.

[95] Cf. Col. 7.5–7 of the Derveni papyrus, where Orpheus is said to have 'wanted to say great things in riddles'. On the emergence of this type of interpretation during this period, see Struck (2004) 21–53.

In investigating the role of these texts in the history of poetics, then, the narrative presented here is, like that of *Geistesgeschichte*, a diachronic, developmental one, examining Presocratic ideas of poetry that would lead up to the famous theories articulated by Plato. The term 'Presocratic' has its faults, in implying a teleological narrative culminating in the triumphant achievement of Socrates, in being used, misleadingly, to refer to figures who were contemporaneous with or younger than Socrates, and in grouping together disparate thinkers who may not have been aware of one another's work whilst excluding others (such as Hesiod or the Hippocratic authors) who may have equally legitimate claims to the title of philosophy.[96] I use it here primarily in reference to these three authors, since, as we have noted, there are good grounds for treating them together aside from the fact that they all wrote in verse. The term is also fitting as I shall argue that the ideas about verse embodied in these texts can be seen as important influences on those that are put into the mouth of Socrates by Plato. But that is not to say that this story is a teleological one. The Presocratics are not considered as points on a steady trajectory from mythological to rational explanations, nor is it assumed that developments in Greek poetics or philosophical expression were always necessarily superior to what came before. It is outside of my scope to explain *why* matters developed in the way that they did: my focus is on the 'what' and the 'how'.[97] The 'Poetry and Poetics' of my title is also mildly polemical, since it presupposes that these words are applicable to authors who were active in the song culture of Archaic and Classical Greece, before terms such as *poietes* and *poiesis* caught on.[98] Though the Presocratic poets may seem to be the authors who epitomise the otherness of Greek song to later conceptions of poetry, the present study argues that, in their use of this medium, they are closer to us than they may appear.

[96] For an excellent discussion of the history of this label, its drawbacks, and its merits, see Laks (2018) 19–34; for further problems with it, see Lloyd (2006).

[97] My interests therefore differ from those who seek to explain the rise of Greek philosophy or 'rational' thought primarily as a consequence of one or other wider historical development, be it literacy (thus, Havelock [1963]; Goody and Watt [1963]; Goody [1977]), the rise of the *polis* (Vernant [1982]; Lloyd [1987] esp. 78–83), architecture (Hahn [2001]), or monetisation (Seaford [2004]).

[98] See n. 29 above.

CHAPTER 1

Xenophanes

1 Introduction

Xenophanes is a pivotal figure in our understanding of ancient Greek intellectual culture. On any account, he occupies an important place in the history of poetics. In his works, we find probably the earliest surviving mention of the names of Homer and Hesiod outside of the latter's self-reference.[1] His criticisms of the Homeric and Hesiodic depictions of the gods have traditionally been regarded as the 'first shot' in the 'ancient quarrel between poetry and philosophy' made famous by Plato (*Resp.* 10.607b–c).[2] Such criticisms have often been seen as provoking Theagenes of Rhegium to write the first book on Homer, outlining allegorical interpretations in defence of the poet.[3] Moreover, Xenophanes' 'attack' on the poets, and in particular on anthropomorphic depictions of gods, has been read as a philosophical rejection of myth, and thus a crucial instance in the historiographical narrative of a Greek progression from 'mythological' to 'rational' forms

[1] Other contenders for the earliest mention of Homer are Callinus fr. 6 W=Paus. 9.9.5 (not a verbatim fragment), ps.-Hesiod fr. 357, Simonides fr. 564 PMG and Heraclitus D21=B42, D22=B56, D24=B105. The former pair are hard to date because of their possibly spurious nature. Xenophanes' apparently lengthy life means that we cannot rule out that his references to Homer post-dated those of his younger contemporaries Simonides and Heraclitus, especially given that Xenophanes seems to refer to the former in D68<B21. For Hesiod, the only other contender (discounting Hesiod's reference to himself) is Heraclitus D25a=B57.

[2] 'First shot': Kahn (2003) 154; see similarly Babut (1974b) 116–17; Heath (2013) 6–8. Kannicht (1988) takes a broader perspective, regarding the quarrel already implicit in Hesiod's *Theogony*. Nightingale (1995) 60–7 and Murray (1996) 231 argue that the quarrel was invented by Plato, a view criticised by Halliwell (1997) 455–6. See Edmundson (1995) and Barfield (2011) (both of whom begin with Plato) for wide-ranging studies of the 'quarrel' throughout the Western tradition.

[3] Pfeiffer (1968) 8–11; Russell (1981) 18–19; Heitsch (1983) 127; Detienne (1986) 64–7; Kannicht (1988) 20. Porphyry's account of Theagenes' interpretation already implies that it is a defence of epic accounts of the gods against the accusation that they are 'inappropriate' (ἀπρεπής), cf. Xenophanes D19=B26.2.

of explanation.[4] On the other hand, more recent commentators have tended to stress that Xenophanes can hardly have intended to attack poetry from the perspective of philosophy, since he was himself a poet and his criticisms of Homer and Hesiod conform to the traditional phenomenon of poetic agonism.[5] Indeed, in many respects, Xenophanes' use of verse has seemed less problematic than that of Parmenides or Empedocles: his elegiac fragments on the appropriate behaviour at the symposium are of similar content and function to the didactic poetry of Solon and Theognis. Thus, 'as an elegiac poet, he was a typical figure of his age'.[6] Additionally, the narrative of a steady progression from 'mythological' to 'rational' forms of explanation has been criticised partly on the grounds that it assumes a teleological development whereby polytheism must give way to Judaeo-Christian monotheism. Once we relinquish such an assumption, Xenophanes' 'single greatest god' may seem no more 'rational' or 'philosophical' than the traditional Greek pantheon.[7]

In spite of Xenophanes' immense importance for these fundamental topics, recent scholarship has seldom engaged in a holistic discussion that encompasses both the cultural context and the philosophical content of the surviving fragments. Literary critics and cultural historians tend to occupy themselves exclusively with the elegies, in isolation from Xenophanes' epistemology and cosmology, which are largely in hexameters. Philosophers, on the other hand, aim to reconstruct the content of Xenophanes' thought, whilst paying less attention to the rhetorical and aesthetic function of the texts.[8] Comments on the issue of Xenophanes' use of verse have tended to focus on the medium's cultural authority and its practical benefits.[9] The present chapter adopts a more fine-grained approach. I shall investigate the sorts of responses and interpretations

[4] Rejection of myth: Detienne (1986) 63–9; Schäfer (1996) esp. 146–62. Key player in development from 'myth to reason': Nestle (1942) 87–95; Snell (1953) 139–43, 195; Fränkel (1955) 335–49, (1975b) 325–37; Heitsch (1966) 216–17; Lloyd (1987) 176–7; Most (1999) 352–3. Morgan (2000) 47–53 provides a brief but nuanced discussion of the issue.

[5] Nightingale (1995) 64; Ford (2002) 46–66; Most (2011) 5; Pozdnev (2016). On Archaic Greek poetic agonism more generally, see Griffith (1990); Collins (2004) (who discusses Xenophanes on pp. 147–51); Burton (2011).

[6] Kahn (2003) 156. Bernabé (1979) 370–1 makes similar remarks.

[7] Gemelli Marciano (2005a); note also R. Fowler (2011) 56, 'If Xenophanes has what we call "myths" in view, then only some myths (the impious ones) are fictional; other myths are good-omened, and the myth itself is not at stake.' The 'myth to reason' narrative is challenged in Buxton (1999).

[8] As examples of the former: Ford (2002) 46–66; Hobden (2013) 22–34; the collection Bugno (2005). Exceptions to this trend are the commentaries of Heitsch (1983) and Lesher (1992).

[9] Most (1999) 352; Patzer (2006) 75; Granger (2007) 430; Sassi (2018) 96–7.

that Xenophanes' verse elicits by drawing upon their literary and performative contexts as well as the wider context of his philosophy.

Unlike Parmenides, who conveniently wrote only a single poem, with Xenophanes we cannot be certain that any two fragments come from the same text. Three or four poems are attested. From Diogenes, in a report which goes back to the disreputable Hellenistic biographer, Lobon of Argos, we learn that 'he composed both on the foundation of Colophon and on the colonisation of Elea 2,000 lines'.[10] Most commentators take this to be a single work, perhaps divided into two books on each of the topics, but the expression leaves open the possibility that they were two separate poems, and that only the latter amounted to 2,000 lines. In any case, these works are likely to have been in elegiacs rather than hexameters: there are some parallels for such lengthy historical elegies, and whilst none of Xenophanes' surviving hexameter fragments would easily fit such poems, at least one of his elegiac fragments (D62=B3) would suit a poem on the history of Colophon.[11] A number of sources mention Xenophanes' *Silloi* – a term usually translated as 'satires' – written in a variety of metres against other philosophers and poets and imitated by the Hellenistic Sceptic philosopher-poet Timon of Phlius.[12] It is not clear to what extent this latter work was a single continuous poem, or a disjointed collection of short vignettes on particular figures. The plural title, Timon's imitation and the fact that it seems to have contained a variety of metres suggest the latter. In either case, one testimony presupposes that the work was of some length, stretching to at least

[10] Diog. Laert. 9.20<D1<A1=Lobon fr. 17, ἐποίησε δὲ καὶ Κολοφῶνος κτίσιν καὶ τὸν εἰς Ἐλέαν τῆς Ἰταλίας ἀποικισμὸν ἔπη δισχίλια. On Lobon as a source for this sort of information, see Trépanier (2004) 27, who notes the biographer's proclivity to provide long, descriptive titles of particular works, and Cerri (2001) 181–2, who disputes the view that he was an unscrupulous falsifier.

[11] See Bowie (1986) 31–2. Although Lobon/Diogenes use ἔπη of this work, the term can refer to elegiacs, as Solon (fr. 1.2 W) and Theognis (20, 22, 755) demonstrate. KRS 166 doubt the existence of this poem, and are followed by Tor (2017) 314, but they expressed this view before Bowie's important arguments in favour of the existence of 'historical elegy', which were in some part confirmed by the publication in 1992 (in *The Oxyrhynchus Papyri* 59 and West [1992]) of new papyri of Simonides' elegies on the battles of Platea and Artemisium. Bowie's notion of 'historical elegy' has been criticised by Sider (2006) and Grethlein (2010) 291–6, but Sider does not deny the existence of lengthy elegies that reported details of a city's legendary past, whilst Grethlein's arguments only suggest that Tyrtaeus' *Eunomia* and Mimnermus' *Smyrneis* could have been sufficiently short to have been performed at symposia. Some positive evidence (i.e. Diogenes/Lobon on Xenophanes' lengthy poem) confirms Bowie's thesis, whilst none is incompatible with it.

[12] The title is attested by Strab.14.1.28 (=DKA20); Procl. *in* Hes. *Op.* 286=D3=A22; schol. ABT *ad* 2.212b (D4=A23). The fragments of Timon are collected as *SH* 775–840, and edited with commentary by di Marco (1989); see also Clayman (2009).

five books.[13] Later sources mention a *Peri Phuseōs*,[14] and Diels-Kranz print fragments under that title, but it should be regarded with caution, as it appears to be a standard Alexandrian label given to the works of those labelled *phusikoi* by Aristotle.[15]

Despite the variety of rhetorical, didactic and aesthetic purposes these various texts must have served, I shall assume that the fact that they all circulated under the same name justifies reading them 'intratextually', that is to say, alongside one another as parts of a coherent whole.[16] But I shall also argue that, within this coherent corpus, the division between the two main metres that Xenophanes uses, hexameters and elegies – which probably also reflects different performance contexts – is a meaningful one. Metre and performance context are the most obvious criteria by which to identify Archaic Greek poetic genres, but genres distinguished by these objective criteria also clearly accumulate distinctive ideological and thematic associations.[17] Xenophanes uses hexameters and elegies for different purposes, which can be elucidated by the divergent traditions of the two genres. I shall consider the hexameter fragments first, since it is largely on the basis of the hexameters that we can reconstruct an epistemological and theological framework within which to read Xenophanes' poetry as a whole.

2 Xenophanes and the Hexameter Genre

Xenophanes has often been regarded as an itinerant rhapsode, a performer of earlier hexameters, who travelled from Colophon to Elea, and who rebelliously took to composing his own iconoclastic poetry.[18] The story offers the romantic image of a performer who one day grew frustrated with his material and abandoned it in favour of his own compositions, setting

[13] D56=B21a, from a Homeric scholiast (*P.Oxy.*1087.40), claims that the word 'Erykos' occurred in the fifth book of Xenophanes' *Silloi*.

[14] The Geneva scholiast on the *Iliad* (D6a<B30); Pollux (<D6bB39); and Stobaeus (D6c<A36).

[15] Cf. KRS 102–3 and 166: 'That Xenophanes wrote a formal work on physical matters is highly improbable.' Contrast Marcovich (1978) 1. On the title *Peri Phuseōs*, see Schmalzriedt (1970).

[16] For the term, see Sharrock and Morales (2000). On the principle that we should read the different fragments of as part of a coherent oeuvre, cf. Morrison (2007) 57–67 who points out that, in the case of most Archaic Greek poets, there is a consistent narratorial persona across the surviving corpus.

[17] For Archaic poetic genres as determined by occasion, see Harvey (1955); Dover (1964) 189; Calame (1974) 124–6 (critiquing the still-influential idea of Rossi [1971] 75–7 that Archaic poets followed unwritten rules); Gentili (1988) 32–7; Nagy (1994); Ford (2002) 10–13. Cf. Plato *Leg.* 3, 700a–701b. On the principle that genres are never purely formal, see Conte (1994) 105–28, and, with respect to early Greek poetry, Swift (2010) 6–34.

[18] This is assumed by the works cited at n. 3 above.

the ball rolling for later attacks on poetry. This biography, however, rests primarily on the flimsy evidence of Diogenes' statement that he 'rhapsodized' his own verses (Diog. Laert. 9.18=D1=A1, ἀλλὰ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐρραψώιδει τὰ ἑαυτοῦ). The key term 'rhapsodized' (ἐρραψώιδει) has led some to infer that Xenophanes was a rhapsodic performer of Homer and Hesiod,[19] but detailed studies of its usage suggest that it merely denotes a reciter of non-lyric verses.[20] Although Xenophanes seems to have been active during the period, in the late sixth century BCE, in which specialised rhapsodic guilds dedicated to Homeric performance started to emerge,[21] it is not clear that there was yet a clear and impenetrable division between rhapsodes who, like Plato's Ion, performed the works of others and *aoidoi*, bards who composed their own work. This was the period in which, according to a well-known Pindar scholion, the 'rhapsode' Cynaethus composed a hymn to Apollo and passed it off as Homer's (*FGrH* 568 F 5). Some late sixth- and early fifth-century BCE sources present the poets Homer, Hesiod and Archilochus themselves as 'rhapsodes'.[22] Most importantly, Diogenes' testimony does not even mention performance of Homer or Hesiod: its main point is that Xenophanes performed *his own* verses, so it is rash to assume anything more than that Xenophanes performed poetry that he composed.

Partly on the basis of this romantic narrative, commentators have often stressed the polemical nature of Xenophanes' relationship with the epic tradition,[23] as is evident from the incompatibility of many of his doctrines with epic as traditionally practised,[24] the critical tone of certain fragments (D8=B11, D9=B12) and the satirical nature of the *Silloi*. Furthermore, it is the hexameters, rather than the elegies, which offer new explanations on the theological and aetiological topics previously covered so influentially by Homer and Hesiod, a detail which could be taken to suggest that Xenophanes chose this medium primarily for

[19] E.g. Gentili (1988) 158; Morgan (2000) 47. KRS 164 state, 'He was certainly not . . . a Homeric rhapsode.' Cf. also Ford (2002) 50.

[20] Ford (1988), (2002) 50 for this definition. Plato uses the term for performers of Archilochus (*Ion* 530b–531a) and Solon (*Timaeus* 21b). See also West (2011).

[21] See, influentially, Burkert (1987b), although he reaches overconfident conclusions about the sixth-century usage on the basis of fifth-century evidence, as Graziosi (2002) 18–40 points out. Hdt. 5.67.1 claims that Cleisthenes, at war with the Argives, banned the rhapsodes from competing at Sicyon in around 570 because the Homeric poems glorified Argos. See further West (1999), (2010).

[22] Heraclit. D21=B42; [Hes.] fr. 357; Pind. *Isthm.* 3.55–6=4.37–8, which, though not mentioning rhapsodes explicitly, all feature wordplay on the etymology. On Cynaethus, see West (1999) 368–72, and, on the blurredness of the distinction between rhapsodes and *aoidoi*, West (2010) 2–3.

[23] In addition to the scholarship cited at n. 3 above, note in particular Classen (1989); Granger (2007) 430; Sassi (2018) 93–8.

[24] I use 'epic' here as a term of convenience to refer to hexameter poems of some length (i.e. including Hesiod and the Homeric Hymns, but excluding hexameter epigrams).

agonistic reasons.[25] But this polemicism, I shall argue, tells only half the story. For there are also more positive dimensions to Xenophanes' participation in this tradition. Though he rejects some traditional aspects, he repurposes others. In particular, he appropriates the immersive and symbolic qualities of early Greek song to provide a particular experience, one that guides his audience towards a new perspective on the world.

a Epistemology and the Immersive World of the Text

Earlier hexameter narrators, at least on the most literal reading, based their ability to speak about the gods and the remote past on the grounds that they had been divinely inspired, typically using an imperative to bid the Muse or Muses to sing themselves, thereby creating some flexibility over whether the audience is supposed to hear a mortal or a divine voice in the subsequent account.[26] Xenophanes, by contrast, rules out the possibility of direct divine-to-mortal communication altogether (D53=B18, D15=A52).[27] The narrator even appears to undermine his own authority to comment on the grand matters of his poem. D49=B34 and D50=B35 present crucial – if challengingly obscure – evidence for the epistemological framework within which to read the surviving fragments:

> καὶ τὸ μὲν οὖν σαφὲς οὔτις ἀνὴρ ἴδεν οὐδέ τις ἔσται
> εἰδὼς ἀμφὶ θεῶν τε καὶ ἅσσα λέγω περὶ πάντων·
> εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπών,
> αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε· δόκος δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται.
>
> And so no man has seen nor will know that which is clear
> About gods and the things which I say about all things;
> For even if he happened especially to say something which has come to fulfilment,
> Nevertheless he himself does not know; but opinion is wrought
> upon all things.
>
> (D49=B34)

[25] Cf. Hdt. 2.53, a statement generally thought to reflect the pervasive influence of Homer and Hesiod on notions of the gods throughout the Greek world from the Archaic period to the end of Classical paganism, as Asheri, Lloyd and Corcella (2007) *ad loc.* note. See also Burkert (1985) 119–25. Schäfer (1996) 147–8 points out the relevance of this testimony to Xenophanes.

[26] *Il.* 1.1; *Od.* 1.1; Hes. *Theog.* 114–15, *Op.* 1–2, fr. 1.1–2; *Herm.* 1.1; *Venus* 1.1; *Hymn. Hom.* 14.2, 19.1, 20.1, 31.1, 32.1, 33.1. Some have argued that we are to imagine the Muses as the narrators (e.g. Ahl and Roisman [1996]; Rabel [1997] 19; Palmer [2013] 318), but if that is the case, the voice can slip back to that of the mortal narrator without warning (e.g. *Il.* 2.484–93; *Theog.* 963–8). For a good overview of this issue, see Morrison (2007) 73–89.

[27] Tor (2013), (2017) 104–54 argues that Xenophanes does not rule out the possibility of divine disclosure of information to mortals *in toto* – they leave signs for us to understand the world (cf. D51=B36); but this still seems to rule out Muse-inspiration.

ταῦτα δεδοξάσθω μὲν ἐοικότα τοῖς ἐτύμοισι . . .

Let these things be thought to be like true things . . .

(D50=B35)

Some have confidently asserted that these lines go together and come at an early point in the physical poem, but there is little supporting evidence for either of these claims.[28] All the same, wherever we place them, they are programmatic of how we are to receive the text. The expression 'about gods and the things which I say about all things' is a zeugma implying some overlap between the two categories.[29] Lesher is surely right to situate these fragments within the context of 'poetic pessimism', such as Hesiod's *Theogony* proem (which D50=B35 seems to adapt) and Homer's re-invocation of the Muses before the Iliadic Catalogue of Ships (*Il.* 2.485–6), both of which stress the ignorance of the mortal poet in contrast to the knowledge of the Muses.[30] This context highlights how Xenophanes' example, at least as it survives, conspicuously lacks the knowledge of the Muses as a counterpoint. As we noted in the Introduction,[31] a number of passages from early hexameter imply that the mortal poet can somehow access the Muses' superhuman eyewitness knowledge of events beyond the perspective of current mortals, whereas, here, 'no man has *seen* that which is clear' about the subject matter, nor, we may infer, is he granted a superhuman vision by divine dispensation. Xenophanes subversively adapts a traditional feature of hexameter poetry in a manner which undermines the authority of earlier poets:[32] in Hesiod and Homer, the ignorance of mortals is emphasised by contrast with the knowledge of the Muses, a feature which underlines the privileged perspective of the Muse-inspired singer; for Xenophanes, mortals are in an equally ignorant state, but there is no possibility of such privileged status.

The epistemological foundation for this pessimism can be fleshed out by some of the other hexameter fragments.[33] Human beliefs tend to be determined by the limited scope of their empirical experience, hence

[28] Fränkel (1993) 128 and Classen (1989) 101, but the only evidence for these claims is that the two fragments could coherently go together, that they could function as introductory to a work, and that they bear resemblance to Hes. *Theog.* 27 and Alcmaeon fr. 1.

[29] For this interpretation, see similarly Barnes (1982) 136–40, and Lesher (1992) 167–8. By contrast, Babut (1974b) 438 n. 1, followed by Reibaud (2012) 55 n. 124, sees the two items 'the gods' and 'what I say' as contrasted, but this possibility is undermined by the fact that Xenophanes *does* actually talk about the gods.

[30] Lesher (1992) 160. [31] See Introduction, Section 2 above. [32] Thus Morgan (2000) 51.

[33] Lesher (1992) 161–6 usefully summarises earlier views. For more recent interpretations, see Ioli (2003), Mogyoródi (2006), Lesher (2008) and Tor (2013).

Thracians believe their gods to be red-haired and blue-eyed like themselves (D13=B16, cf. D14=B15), and humans, if they had never tasted honey, would think that figs were much sweeter than they do (D52=B38). As Emese Mogyoródi points out, this implies that humans can never really know how sweet a thing is, as there is always the possibility that there is something sweeter that they have never tasted which would alter their perception of sweetness. If humans could taste all sweet things, they might be able to have knowledge of how sweet a thing is, as they would know how sweet it is relative to all other sweet things; but that is impossible in Xenophanes' universe, as it appears to be infinite in extent (D41=B28).[34] Gods may have such knowledge, but they do not communicate it to mortals (D53=B18). The best mortals can do, it seems, is to amass as many and as varied experiences as possible, in order to judge qualities such as sweetness according to the widest possible scale.

This epistemological pessimism has marked linguistic implications.[35] The hypothetical subject of the conditional clause of D49=B34.4–5, who does not know whether he has spoken 'something which has come to fulfilment', might just as well be Xenophanes himself: neither we, nor he, can know whether his account happens to be telling the truth. The verb τύχοι, as Fränkel argued, is best translated as 'succeeded in', rather than 'happened to', for it evokes the original usage of the verb as 'to hit the mark', thereby activating the common metaphor of archery for speech.[36] The speaker would have no means of knowing whether the 'arrows' of his speech have 'hit the mark', in the sense of reporting what 'has been accomplished' (τετελεσμένον). τετελεσμένον εἰπών adapts the traditional hexameter expression σοὶ δ' ἐγὼ ἐξερέω ὡς καὶ τετελεσμένον ἔσται, used of confident assertions about the future, such as threats.[37] Its usage here may then imply that statements about the matters in question have the same status as statements about the future, of which the truthfulness cannot be determined in the present. The range of topics over which one cannot be certain whether one's speech has 'hit the mark' seems to be a wide one. If

[34] Mogyoródi (2006) esp. 135–41. On Xenophanes' infinite universe, see also Mourelatos (2002) 332–6 and (2008a) 138–9.

[35] As Morgan (2000) 52–3 argues, Xenophanes raises wider problems about the relationship between knowledge and its linguistic representation.

[36] Fränkel (1993); for speech as an 'arrow' that might 'hit the target', note Aesch. *Ag.* 1194, Pind. *Ol.* 2.83–5.

[37] Lesher (1983) 29ff. and Tor (2013) 260 regard the expression as having its provenance in Homeric scenes of divination, but it is never used by any of the Homeric seers or prophets and is frequently used of threats by both mortal and divine characters (See *Il.* 1.212, 2.257, 8.286, 401, 454, 9.310, 14.196, 18.427, 23.410, 672; *Od.* 2.187, 5.90, 15.536, 16.440, 17.163, 18.82, 19.309, 487, 547).

the above sketch of Xenophanes' epistemology is along the right lines, then the uncertainty described in D49=B34.3–4 refers to large parts of language in general, given that one cannot even have knowledge of such a mundane detail as the sweetness of figs. In sum, we lack knowledge, and consequently do not know whether our statements, even those concerning mundane qualities, 'hit the target' and reflect objective reality.

These claims have been seen to entail a denial of the authority of earlier Greek poets concerning the affairs of the gods and the events of the remote past.[38] But Xenophanes' relationship with earlier poetry can be regarded as more complex than a straightforward denial of their veracity. Audiences were certainly aware that poets made up large parts of their tales and that the effects of their poems do not depend upon their factual accuracy.[39] For Xenophanes, I suggest, many if not most claims about the perceptible world assume the problematic status of earlier Greek poetry.[40] Early Greek poetry often presents an epistemological distinction between, on the one hand, the affairs to which poets could only have access with the aid of the Muses and, on the other, the everyday affairs for which Muse-inspiration is unnecessary. Hesiod is able to teach Perses about seafaring, despite the fact that he has hardly any experience in the skill, because the Muses have taught him (*Op.* 646–62), a detail which implies that he would not need the Muses if he *had* had such experience. For Xenophanes, however, there is no such stark distinction between the topics for which one could rely on the Muses and those in our immediate expertise: we lack knowledge even over how sweet a particular food is. In this respect, the familiar world we inhabit occupies the same epistemic status as the world of the remote, epic past of which Homer and Hesiod spoke: it is equally uncertain and open to contestation.

This analogy between the everyday world of experience and the remote world of most surviving hexameter poetry[41] is supported by the adaptation of an earlier hexameter expression in D50=B35. The line conspicuously resembles the locution, 'Lies like true things' (ψεύδεα . . . ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα), used most famously by Hesiod's Muses (*Theog.* 27), but also of Odysseus' deceptive tales on Ithaca (*Od.* 19.203). In the most extensive study of this relationship, Jenny

[38] Morgan (2000) 51–3.

[39] See, on this topic, Pratt (1993) and Bowie (1993). Some poetic content (such as Demodocus' lay of Aphrodite and Ares, and Hesiod's *ainos* of the hawk and the nightingale) makes no pretence of factual truthfulness, and the claim, attributed to Solon (fr. 29 W), that 'poets tell many lies' became proverbial. Cf. also Pind. *Ol.* 1.28–9, *Nem.* 7.20–3; Gorgias D35=B23; *Dissoi Logoi* 3.10.

[40] Absolute claims of the type 'this honey is very sweet' would occupy such a status, but Xenophanes might accept more limited claims of the type 'this honey is sweeter than these figs' as deriving unproblematically from the knowledge of the speaker.

[41] But not all, given the present-day setting of Hesiod's *Works and Days*.

Bryan argues that the allusion draws attention to the replacement of ὁμοῖα with ἐοικότα: the former denotes equivalence, the latter, 'contingent and potentially specious similarity'.[42] Xenophanes' account, then, is not marked out as something which has the same effect as a true account, but rather as something which has an uncertain relationship with the truth, since he cannot know whether his speech has 'hit the mark' concerning the nature of godhood. I would add that the poetological significance of the earlier expression is also relevant. 'Lies like true things' (ψεύδεα . . . ἐτύμοισιν ὁμοῖα) indicates the capacity of Greek hexameter poetry to be fictionally verisimilitudinous:[43] Odysseus, both liar and storyteller par excellence, is able to 'fashion many lies like the truth' (*Od.* 19.203) in telling a story that seems real, even though it is factually inaccurate and bears little resemblance to events which actually occurred.[44] Xenophanes, here, exploits his audience's familiarity with this capacity of earlier poetry to illustrate the epistemological status of the world we inhabit: just as we cannot trust the engrossing tales of earlier poets, so we cannot trust any account of the natural world, even an account concerning mundane, familiar matters. An ancient reception corroborates this interpretation. Plutarch quotes D49=B34.1–2 as verses that the young should bear in mind so that they remember the precept that poets tell many lies (*De aud. poet.* 17E), and places Xenophanes' epistemological comments within the context of longer-standing discussions over the truth status of poetry. Thus, at least one perceptive ancient reader saw D49=B34 as a statement concerning the potential fictionality of poetry.

D41=B28 further supports this understanding of Xenophanes' use of hexameters:

> γαίης μὲν τόδε πεῖρας ἄνω παρὰ ποσσὶν ὁρᾶται
> ἠέρι προσπλάζον, τὸ κάτω δ' ἐς ἄπειρον ἱκνεῖται.
>
> This limit of the earth is seen from on top at our feet
> touching the air, but the underside stretches infinitely.

The fragment expands upon the earlier formulaic phrase ἐπ' ἀπείρονα γαῖαν, 'on the limitless earth', which is especially used to label the earth as the residence of mortals and demigods.[45] The traditional expression for Xenophanes is only

[42] Bryan (2012) 16–48.

[43] Thus Rutherford (1992) *ad Od.* 19.203 and, on the much-discussed line from the *Theogony*, Stroh (1976), Pratt (1993) 106–13 and Heiden (2007).

[44] See Collobert (2004) for the idea that the *Odyssey*'s poetics is founded upon the notion of *vraisemblance* or 'verisimilitude'. See similarly, on Odysseus' 'lies like the truth', Williams (2002) 175–7.

[45] E.g. *Il.* 7.446; *Theog.* 187; *Op.* 160 etc. See *LfgrE s.v.* ἀπείρων ιαα.

half-right: earth is limitless as far as it descends – 'the underside stretches infinitely' or 'indefinitely' (ἐς ἄπειρον) – but the visible surface is a limit. The fragment shows an expansion and adjustment of the traditional expression: as was the case in the traditional formula, Xenophanes' earth is specifically the residence of humans, is presented from a human perspective (παρὰ ποσσὶν ὁρᾶται) and is limitless; but, by contrast with the formula, Xenophanes specifies that the earth is limitless only in one direction. If Xenophanes' physical poetry is about what 'no man has seen' (D49=B34.1), D41=B28 marks out the limits to our visual experience, describing what goes on beneath the earth and beyond our field of vision. The deictic τόδε implies that the audience are agents of the passive ὁρᾶται: it is they who see 'this' limit of earth to which the performer refers. They are thereby invited to regard themselves as characters in Xenophanes' poetry. The stylised world of hexameter becomes the world of our immediate sensory experience. This strategy, I suggest, serves to illustrate an epistemological point: just as epic is unverifiable, so, for the most part, we cannot make verifiable, positive claims about our sensory experience. If this is correct, then our experience of the poetry functions as a synecdoche for our experience of the world at large: we are to apply the same sort of scrutiny to our experiences as we might do to the questionable tales of the earlier poets.

It might be objected that this is an overinterpretation of a very brief fragment, but it would be reductive to deny any connection between the linguistic comment of D49=B34 and Xenophanes' own use of a highly defamiliarised form of language, the *Kunstsprache* or 'artificial language' of hexameter poetry. The linguistic implications of his epistemological pessimism encourage us to reflect on the triangular relationship between his language, the language of hexameter tradition and the world to which he refers. Through immersing his audience in the world of the text, challenging them to penetrate its details and ponder its correspondence to reality, Xenophanes exploits some of the traditional functions of hexameter poetry.

b Xenophanes' Theology and the Language of Hexameter Poetry

In addition to the exclusion of Muse-inspiration, Xenophanes' theology is inimical to traditional epic in further respects. The epodic D12=B14 declares that mortals 'suppose that gods are born (γεννᾶσθαι), wear their clothes and have a voice and body'.[46] The clear implication is that mortals are mistaken in this supposition, especially since, in D16=B23, we learn that

[46] D12=B14 is a couplet comprising an iambic followed by a hexameter. The first line has sometimes been regarded as a corruption (e.g. Wright [1985] 47). However, Diogenes Laertius' testimony that

the single greatest god is 'not like mortals in body or thought'. The principle that gods are so unlike humans is incompatible with a literal understanding of much earlier hexameter poetry, and indeed, much earlier Greek myth in general, with its anthropomorphic deities. Most pointedly, theogony is invalidated, and there may be a denial of Hesiod's *Theogony* in particular if we read D50=B35 as alluding to its Muses.[47]

Nevertheless, in D26=B33, Xenophanes uses language that is redolent of theogony, evoking the very genre to which his theology seems most hostile:

> πάντες γὰρ γαίης τε καὶ ὕδατος ἐκγενόμεσθα.
>
> For we were all born of earth and water.

Although Sextus Empiricus, who quotes the fragment, seems to read D26=B33 as an adaptation from Homer,[48] the closest parallel is Hesiod, *Theog.* 154:[49]

> ὅσσοι γὰρ Γαίης τε καὶ Οὐρανοῦ ἐξεγένοντο,
>
> As many as were born of Earth and Heaven,

The second and third feet of Hesiod and Xenophanes' lines are identical and both lines refer to collections of beings who are born of two elemental deities. The exact scope of Hesiod's ὅσσοι, 'as many as', is unclear, as it could refer to all of the children of Gaia and Ouranos or just the ones recently mentioned, the Cyclopes and the Hundred-handers. The use of a similar expression suggests a generic alignment with the Hesiodic text which flags Xenophanes' departure from the Hesiodic aetiology: Hesiod explains the origins of these beings by means of sexual reproduction of the earliest deities, whilst Xenophanes probably explained the origins of humans by means of physical processes, given his non-anthropomorphic theology and his physical explanation of other phenomena. The claim that earth and water were the first principles of all things appears to have been supported by empirical observations, such as the appearance of shells inland and of fish-like fossils (Hippol. *Haer.* 1.14.5<D22<A33). The

Xenophanes wrote in iambics as well as elegiacs and hexameters (9.20<D1<A1) speaks in its favour. Such an epodic combination is paralleled in the eighth-century BCE 'Nestor Cup' inscription (*CEG* 454) and in the *Margites.* Wilamowitz (1962) 602–3 defended the authenticity of the fragment on the basis of this evidence and even argued that Xenophanes composed the *Margites*, as the opening fragment of the poem describes an old singer coming to Colophon.

[47] On Xenophanes' intertextual relationship with the *Theogony* more generally, see Classen (1989).

[48] *Math.* 10.314, probably referring to Menelaus' exclamation to the Achaeans, ἀλλ' ὑμεῖς μὲν πάντες ὕδωρ καὶ γαῖα γένοισθε (*Il.* 7.99), a curse meaning, effectively, 'may you rot!' See Kirk (1990) *ad loc.*

[49] Cf. also Zeus's expression at *Theog.* 648: Τιτῆνές τε θεοὶ καὶ ὅσοι Κρόνου ἐκγενόμεσθα.

occurrence of the phrase, then, within the context of a different cosmology, which purports to derive from human enquiry rather than divine inspiration, is a function of how a traditional hexameter topic, the creation of humans, is given new explanation. But the wider context of Xenophanes' philosophy means that 'born of' in D26=B33 can no longer refer to a literal process of sexual reproduction, as it does in Hesiod's *Theogony*: it must be understood as a metaphor. A further example occurs at D46=B30, where the sea is referred to as the γενέτωρ (line 5), or 'procreator' of the clouds and winds, a personifying term first attested here that evokes theogonical explanation. As in D26=B33, within the context of Xenophanes' anti-anthropomorphism, the term becomes conspicuously metaphorical: the sea is not really the procreator of clouds and winds but is its source.

One difference, then, between Xenophanes and his hexameter predecessors is that he sharpens the distinction between literal and metaphorical depictions of the gods by imposing such strict and explicitly stated conditions on what counts as truly divine: where his language contradicts his explicit doctrines, we must understand it as metaphorical.[50] By contrast, in Homer or Hesiod, it is not always clear whether this sort of personifying language is meant literally or metaphorically, partly because an essential function of their poetry does not depend on its factual accuracy.[51] Ancient audiences were divided on this issue: already by the fifth century, some sources treat the canonical hexameter poets as representing the gods literally, whilst others see their works as providing *ainigmata*, 'allegories' or 'riddles', which must be decoded in order to access the true underlying meanings.[52]

Xenophanes' more conspicuously metaphorical use of language might, then, be taken to presuppose the possibility of a more 'rational', non-metaphorical way of speaking about this sort of subject matter, one that transparently corresponds to its referents. But the misgivings about mortal language expressed in D49=B34 seem to rule out this possibility and the claim that mortals wrongly suppose that gods have 'their [i.e. human] voice' (τὴν σφετέρην . . . φωνήν, D12=B14.2) implies an imperfection in mortal language.[53] I would therefore prefer to see Xenophanes, not as pointing towards some 'rational' ideal of non-metaphorical speech, but as

[50] Cf. Lloyd (1987) 178: 'the important difference [between Xenophanes and earlier Greek hexameter poets] is that Xenophanes guards himself against too literal interpretation of *his* religious positions'.
[51] Thus e.g. Macleod (1982) 7; Heath (1985) 259–62; Bowie (1993) 8–23; Pratt (1993) *passim*; Halliwell (2011) 36–92.
[52] See Introduction, Section 2 above.
[53] See Chapter 2 n. 19 below on the possibility that divine language is different from that of mortals.

manipulating for didactic purposes the tendency of hexameters to invite a metaphorical interpretation. Our interpretation of Xenophanes' metaphors serves to prepare us for an interpretation of the world. The occurrence of *gignomai* and its cognates in new contexts such as D26=B33 and D46=B30 provokes reflection on the mechanisms by which currently observable phenomena were produced, and on what it really means to 'come to be'. In this way, the characteristic tendency of Greek song to invite a symbolic interpretation is enlisted to guide the audience to a new way of looking at things.

A further strategy that serves this end is the evocation of certain traditional, anthropomorphic gods, especially Zeus. Consider D46=B30:

> πηγὴ δ' ἐστὶ θάλασσ(α) ὕδατος, πηγὴ δ' ἀνέμοιο·
> οὔτε γὰρ ἐν νέφεσιν <γίνοιτό κε ἶς ἀνέμοιο
> ἐκπνείοντος> ἔσωθεν ἄνευ πόντου μεγάλοιο
> οὔτε ῥοαὶ ποταμῶν οὔτ' αἰ<θέρος> ὄμβριον ὕδωρ,
> ἀλλὰ μέγας πόντος γενέτωρ νεφέων ἀνέμων τε
> καὶ ποταμῶν.
>
> And the sea is the source of water, the source of the wind;
> for there would not within the clouds <come to be the force of wind
> blowing> from inside without the great sea
> nor the currents of rivers nor the rainy water of the air,
> but the great sea is the procreator of clouds and winds
> and the rivers.

The fragment is quoted by the Geneva scholiast to *Il.* 21.195–7, where Okeanos is the source of all rivers, seas, springs and wells. Xenophanes' notion of the sea as the γενέτωρ, not only of waters but also of winds and clouds, may be a development from the occasionally attested idea that Poseidon controls winds and storms (e.g. at *Od.* 5.291–9).[54] It is equally an adaptation of the Hesiodic depiction of Pontus as the father of the anthropomorphic Nereus, Thaumas, Phorcys, Ceto and Eurybia (*Theog.* 233–9).[55] But Zeus is also strongly evoked. 'The great sea, the procreator of clouds and winds' recalls the common hexameter formula for the king of Olympus, 'father of men and gods' (πατὴρ ἀνδρῶν τε θεῶν τε). The fact that the great sea here usurps Zeus's long-standing, traditional role as the god of wind and rains confirms this connection.[56] In fact, Xenophanes presents the sea in a grandiloquent manner that

[54] Classen (1989) 97.
[55] Cf. Lesher (1992) 137: 'for Xenophanes *pontos* "begets" only clouds, wind, and water'.
[56] As Classen (1989) 98 points out, cf. *Od.* 5.303–5, 9.67–9, 12.313–15. For Zeus as responsible for wind and rain in both literature and lived religion, see Parker (1996) 29–32.

would befit Zeus, manifest in the anaphora of 'spring', and in the emphasis on γενέτωρ, as an affirmative predicate after a tricolon of negated ones.

Zeus is still more strongly evoked in the fragments that describe Xenophanes' single greatest god:

> εἷς θεός, ἔν τε θεοῖσι καὶ ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστος,
> οὔτι δέμας θνητοῖσιν ὁμοίιος οὐδὲ νόημα.
>
> One god, both among gods and mortals the greatest,
> Not like mortals in his body or his thought.
>
> (D16=B23)

> οὖλος ὁρᾶι, οὖλος δὲ νοεῖ, οὖλος δέ τ' ἀκούει.
>
> Whole he sees, whole he thinks, and whole he hears (D17=B24)

> ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθε πόνοιο νόου φρενὶ πάντα κραδαίνει
>
> But without labour he shakes all things with the organ of his thought.
>
> (D18=B25)

> αἰεὶ δ' ἐν ταὐτῶι μίμνει κινούμενος οὐδέν
> οὐδὲ μετέρχεσθαί μιν ἐπιπρέπει ἄλλοτε ἄλληι
>
> But always he remains in the same place, not moving at all
> Nor is it fitting for him to travel now to one place, now to another
>
> (D19=B26)

D18=B25 reworks the earlier conception of Zeus's ability to determine all things simply by giving the nod. The detail that Xenophanes' god 'shakes' all things (πάντα κραδαίνει) recalls the image of Zeus 'shaking' Olympus when he nods assent to Thetis' request at *Il.* 1.528–30.[57] In Xenophanes' version, the physical act is diminished: whilst Zeus nods with his head, causing his hair to flow from his scalp and Olympus to shake, Xenophanes' god does this all with his mind, without any motion (cf. D19=B26). D16=B23 similarly invites comparison with Zeus. Although the expression, 'one god, among gods' seems paradoxical, the fragment does not present a contradiction or a monotheistic theory, as some have supposed, for there is no contradiction in the henotheistic claim that there is one god who is greatest among gods and mortals but more than one

[57] Note also *Il.* 8.199. See Lesher (1992) 109–10 for this and further parallels.

god exists.[58] The notion of one god being 'the greatest' (μέγιστος) is a further detail familiar from Greek literary depictions of Zeus. In similar phrasing to D16=B23, the short Homeric hymn to Zeus describes him as 'the best and greatest of gods' (θεῶν τὸν ἄριστον . . . ἠδὲ μέγιστον, *Hymn. Hom.* 23.1). The detail that this is without toil conforms to the tendency of early Greek poetry to describe gods as doing things 'easily', but this seems especially associated with Zeus.[59] The comparison, however, throws into relief the non-anthropomorphic nature of Xenophanes' god: D16=B23.1, taken on its own, could in fact describe Zeus; the following line would then come as an *aprosdoketon*, an unexpected twist that this god is in fact not Zeus at all for it is not like humans in body or appearance.

Indeed, D16=B23.2 is an adaptation of the hexameter formula οὐ δέμας οὐδὲ φυήν, 'not in respect of body or stature', which is repeatedly used of comparisons between mortals and gods. Calypso compares herself favourably to Penelope on the grounds that she is not like her 'in respect of body or stature' (*Od.* 5.212–13). Odysseus himself uses the formula to deny that he is similar to the gods (*Od.* 7.210), and the Cretan leader in the *Homeric Hymn to Apollo* deploys it to identify the god as unlike mortals (463–5).[60] Comparison with the original highlights, by contrast, the mental aspect of Xenophanes' god – it is unlike in respect of its mind rather than its appearance – whilst at the same time illustrating that Xenophanes' non-anthropomorphic deity is simply an extension of the traditional belief that gods are 'unlike' mortals in certain respects.

On one level, then, Xenophanes appropriates traditional forms and imagery to throw into relief the points of contrast between his own and previous explanations. But there is a further, positive dimension to this implicit comparison. Rather than seeing the allusions to Zeus as wholly negative, we might also regard them as a means of revealing the nature of Xenophanes' deity not only by contrast but also by analogy. This god, in being the greatest and most powerful being, fills a role once occupied by Zeus. The image of Zeus thus serves as a symbol for the unfamiliar god. In

[58] On this question, see recently Versnel (2011) 244–66, who argues that Xenophanes exhibits cognitive dissonance, in being both a monotheist (in conceiving of a god as encompassing the whole universe, a view well attested in the *testimonia* e.g. [Arist.] *MXG* 3.977a11–4ff.=R6+R14=A28, Simpl. *Phys.* 22.22ff.=R4<A31, Cic. *Acad. Pr.* 2.18, *Nat. D.* 1.11.28=R23=A34) and polytheist (as conceiving of multiple lesser gods within that singular cosmic god).

[59] Of Zeus: *Il.* 15.490, 16.690=17.178, Hes. *Op.* 5–7, 379, Aesch. *Eum.* 651; of an anonymous god at Thgn. 406; of gods in general: *Od.* 16.211, possibly Archil. 130; Aesch. *Supp.* 100. See West (1978) 139–40.

[60] Note also the use at *Il.* 1.115 (Agamemnon's comparison of Chryseis to Clytemnestra) and Ap. Rhod. 2.37 (the narrator compares the appearance of Amyclus and Polydeuces).

fact, the restrictions over what one could accurately say about this god seem so tight that it is virtually only in symbols that one *could* talk about him. His unmoving (D19=B26), pointedly non-anthropomorphic nature (D16=B23) almost rules out the possibility of a narrative about him: narrative texts represent events and have a linear progression.[61] The fact that this god is unchanging (D19=B26) limits the sorts of events in which he could be an agent: he participates in mental events (D17=B24; D18=B25) but his physical immobility means that he could not be the subject of the sorts of physical narratives of Greek myth. A narrative about the mental behaviour of Xenophanes' god would be quite different from any known Greek narrative. The evocations of Zeus serve as a means of saying the unsayable about this god who could not be the subject of any conventional hexameter narrative.

This end is also served by the formal aspects. Xenophanes' grandiloquent diction in D46=B30 has the trappings of *thespis aude*, the divine speech that opens a channel between mortals and the divine, but it is directed towards the sea rather than any anthropomorphic god, inviting the audience to view the natural world with the respect that typified attitudes towards the divine. Form also has a religious significance in the fragments describing the single deity, for they appear distinctively hymnic.[62] In addition to the resemblance between D16=B23.1 and *Hymn. Hom*. 23.1, these fragments, when taken together, constitute an aretalogy, a form characteristic of hymns.[63] We might compare the description of Zeus's attributes at the hymnic opening to the *Works and Days* (5–8):[64]

> ῥέα μὲν γὰρ βριάει, ῥέα δὲ βριάοντα χαλέπτει,
> ῥεῖα δ' ἀρίζηλον μινύθει καὶ ἄδηλον ἀέξει,
> ῥεῖα δέ τ' ἰθύνει σκολιὸν καὶ ἀγήνορα κάρφει
> Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης, ὃς ὑπέρτατα δώματα ναίει.
>
> For easily he strengthens, and easily he crushes the strong,
> And easily he diminishes the famous and increases the obscure,
> And easily he straightens the crooked and withers the bold
> Zeus, high-thundering, who dwells in the highest palace.

[61] For these as two necessary conditions for narrative, see Lowe (2000) 20 and similarly Cobley (2014) 5.

[62] Deichgräber (1933) 350–1, 360; Granger (2007) 424.

[63] Janko (1981) 11–12.

[64] For this opening as a hymn note e.g. West (1978) 136–7 (this section as a *prooimion*, like the Homeric Hymns); Janko (1981) 22. Other hymnic uses of anaphora, noted by Deichgräber (1933) 360, include *OF* 243.1–7, 245.1–7.

As appears to be the case in the Xenophanean lines, there is a list of present-tense verbs outlining the god's attributes and the repeated 'easily' corresponds to the repetitions of Xenophanes' 'whole' (D17=B24). His singular god is thus presented in a stylised manner that implies that he is worthy of the sort of veneration previously reserved for the familiar pantheon. The hymnic quality of these fragments implies that their performance would be an act of piety towards the god, and piety is attested elsewhere as a distinctive concern of Xenophanes (D59=B1.14–15; Aristotle, *Rhet.* 2.23.1400b5–8=P17=A13). It is possible that, like other hymns, there is a hope that this poetry will please the single greatest god and induce him to dispense good fortune to the performer.[65] But a further function must surely be to promote reverence for this unfamiliar deity among the audience by redirecting the traditional associations of hymnic form towards this strange new singular deity, a tactic that would be difficult if not impossible in a prose treatise. The hymnic form, then, like the use of symbolism, functions as a means by which to lead the audience to a contemplation of the ineffable divine: through the form, the text communicates more than it states literally.

c The Attacks on Homer and Hesiod

This concern for piety also underlies what are arguably Xenophanes' most famous fragments, the attacks on Homer and Hesiod, though scholars have tended to see the butt of these attacks as being inaccuracy.[66] For Lloyd, these criticisms presuppose a '*literalist* interpretation of representations of the gods . . . [Xenophanes was] starkly literal-minded'.[67] Certainly, as we have noted, Xenophanes' theological doctrines entail that most earlier Greek hexameter poetry – with its anthropomorphic depictions of the divine – is factually incorrect,[68] and, as we shall see below, he describes Titans, Giants and Centaurs, the subject matter of some earlier verse (although not the Homeric epics), as πλάσματα, 'fabrications' (D59=B1.23). But again, this only tells half of the story, as a closer examination of the relevant fragments shall reveal:

[65] *Pace* Warren (2013) 307–10, who argues that Xenophanes' gods do not intervene directly inhuman affairs, but this overlooks the fact that the god 'steers all things' (D18=B25), and so any good fortune we experience must be divinely dispensed. Cf. Tor (2017) 139–42 on Xenophanean piety and divine disclosure. On this function of Greek hymns, see Furley (1995).

[66] Rösler (1980a) 286–9; Verdenius (1983) 28; Lloyd (1987) 177–9; Halliwell (1998) 10–13; Finkelberg (1998) 18–27; Most (1999) 337–8; Cf. Verdenius (1970) on Homer as 'the educator of the Greeks'.

[67] Lloyd (1987) 177–8 (original italics).

[68] Especially D12=B14, but also D14=B15 and D13=B16.

ἐξ ἀρχῆς καθ᾽ Ὅμηρον ἐπεὶ μεμαθήκασι πάντες . . .

Since, from the beginning, all people have learned according to Homer . . . (D10=B10)

πάντα θεοῖσ᾽ ἀνέθηκαν Ὅμηρός θ᾽ Ἡσίοδός τε,
ὅσσα παρ᾽ ἀνθρώποισιν ὀνείδεα καὶ ψόγος ἐστίν,
κλέπτειν μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν.

Homer and Hesiod have attributed all things to gods
Which are a cause for reproach and censure among mortals,
Stealing and committing adultery and deceiving one another. (D8=B11)

ὡς πλεῖστ(α) ἐφθέγξαντο θεῶν ἀθεμίστια ἔργα,
κλέπτειν μοιχεύειν τε καὶ ἀλλήλους ἀπατεύειν.

For the most part, they uttered profane things about gods,
Stealing and committing adultery and deceiving one another. (D9=B12)

D8=B11 and D9=B12 concern the impiety of the poets, as Sextus assumes when quoting D8=B11 (*Math.* 9.192–3) to corroborate the point that poetry 'is full of all kinds of impiety' (πάσης γὰρ ἀσεβείας ἐστὶ πλήρης).[69] The repeated line has led some scholars to regard D9=B12 as a corruption of the more extensive D8=B11, but since repeated lines are a distinctive feature of Greek epic style this inference is unwarranted.[70] The repetition is better seen as a deliberate emphasis. As commentators have often pointed out, the repeated line recalls events in the Homeric poems, such as the *Dios Apate* scene, where Hera deceived Zeus, and Demodocus' song of Aphrodite's adultery with Ares, as well as the *Homeric Hymn to Hermes*, which so memorably paints the god as a shameless thief.[71] There is not much more to go on, but the vocabulary further implies that the poets' depictions of the gods commit a deleterious impiety. I have followed the standard translation of ἀνέθηκαν as 'attributed', but, as Heitsch has suggested, the verb may here also connote the sense of 'set up as set up as a votive gift, dedicate' (LSJ *s.v.* II), a possibility recommended by the juxtaposition with θεοῖσι, 'to the gods'.[72] Songs are themselves often offerings,[73] so the possible implication is that Homer and Hesiod composed songs as gifts to the gods which are in

[69] Translation here from Bury (1936).
[70] As Babut (1974a) 85–6 points out. Cf. the self-conscious repetitions in Empedocles D45=B25.
[71] For more extensive discussion of the possible episodes here referenced, see Babut (1974a) 87–9; Heitsch (1983) 125–6; Classen (1989) 92–3.
[72] See Heitsch (1983) 125.
[73] For this principle of hymns, see Bremer (1998) 134–7. Note also the use metaphor of *agalma*, 'pleasing offering' for song in Pindar (*Nem.* 3.13, cf. *Nem.* 5.1) and Bacchylides (5.4, 10.11), on which see Steiner (1993).

fact a source of revulsion even among mortals. This would be a satirical gesture: the poets were foolish enough to think that they would actually please the gods by portraying them as engaging in such deceptive, adulterous and kleptomaniac behaviour. One might object that the final line of the fragment refers to particular content, not to the songs themselves, but this detail need not rule out the possibility of such an implicit joke and, in any case, in an era before distinct, generally accepted song-titles are attested, a summary of the content is one means of referring to a particular story or text.[74]

Be that as it may, the impiety of these portrayals is made more explicit in D9=B12. The adjective ἀθεμίστος is typically used in connection with actions that are unspeakably perverse or transgress the rules of religion. Homer uses it of the man who loves civil war (*Il.* 9.63) and the Cyclopes (*Od.* 9.106), while Herodotus mentions the unspecified ἀθέμιστα deeds that the Persian governor Artayctes does to women in the temple of Protesilaus, for which he is eventually crucified (7.33). Parmenides and Empedocles would cast their poems in the tradition of mystic speech that was characterised by θέμις, religious 'right' or 'correctness'.[75] For Xenophanes, the Homeric and Hesiodic poems are the opposite of pious speech.

Possibly, the underlying idea is that this impious speech brings displeasure to the single greatest god, just as Xenophanes' own poetry seems, like other hymns, to be designed to please him. This motivation would be paralleled in the roughly contemporary denials of certain myths by Stesichorus (frr. 90–1 Finglass) and Pindar (*Ol.* 1.23–35, 52–3), although unlike Xenophanes, they do not rule out the whole anthropomorphic framework for traditional depictions of the gods and, of course, it is not clear how serious Stesichorus is when recanting his earlier account of Helen. Less tentatively, D10=B10 supports the notion that Xenophanes deemed this kind of speech wrongful on the grounds that it promotes impiety and generally bad behaviour among mortals. The fragment is agonisingly incomplete: it is quoted by Herodian to illustrate the contraction of the penultimate syllable of the verb, so he offers no clue as to context or the apodosis of the sentence. 'From the beginning' (ἐξ ἀρχῆς) may denote an early stage either of humankind in general or of an individual lifetime (i.e. 'from youth').[76] In either case, the fact that the

[74] Note the way in which, before the book-divisions of the Homeric poems, references to particular episodes take the form of summary descriptions (e.g. Hdt. 2.116, Thuc. 1.9.4).

[75] See Chapter 2 n. 86 and Chapter 3, Section 4c below.

[76] At D53=B18.1 Xenophanes uses ἀπ' ἀρχῆς in the former sense, but note Gorgias B11a=D25.29 for the latter.

early influence is significant suggests that this education ingrains habits that will affect subsequent behaviour and outlook. Studies of the early usage of μανθάνειν suggest that the verb here refers not only to the learning of information but also to the development of habits and customs.[77] The fragment leaves open the possibility that Homer's factual inaccuracy is not objectionable in and of itself – the tentative nature of Xenophanes' own claims about the gods makes it unlikely that he would have confidently denied the factual content of claims made by others – rather, the problem seems to be Homer's undesirable influence on mortal customs. Indeed, this is the problem with certain types of speech in D59=B1, where talk of battles with mythical monsters or of civic strife is excluded from the ideal symposium (D59=B1.20–4), probably for the reason that they disrupt the harmony of the gathering. Strictly speaking, none of this entails that the problem with Homeric and Hesiodic depictions of the gods was their inaccuracy, since one could imagine depictions of the gods which would be inaccurate from Xenophanes' perspective without exhibiting these boorish behaviours.

The parallels with Plato's reservations about poetry in the *Republic* have sometimes been noted and can be instructive.[78] As scholars have pointed out in the case of Plato, the sort of texts to be censored are not books that are read privately but are communal public performances, more analogous to modern mass media such as popular television programmes and blockbuster films than to modern poetry.[79] Just as twentieth- and twenty-first-century commentators sometimes criticise graphic depictions of sex and violence on television for gradually moulding societal norms, Xenophanes criticises Homer and Hesiod's depictions of the gods as normalising deception and adultery. In Xenophanes' case, the issue is more salient since it concerns the depiction of gods who are the object of worship.[80] But his criticism does not entail that he lacked a conception of fiction. The fragments are concerned with poetry's social function, and its veridical status plays a role in this – it ought not to present falsehoods about the gods lest audiences should believe false things about them – but the main emphasis concerns the types of behaviour that the poems encourage, a quality that is not exclusively determined by their veracity. It is not the

[77] See Lesher (1992) 81–2, following Snell (1973). Cf. *Il.* 6.444–5.
[78] Babut (1974a) 105–9; Lesher (1992) 82; Cerri (1996) 55–66, whose discussion of Xenophanes is limited to D59=B1.
[79] Nehamas (1988); Burnyeat (1997) esp. 249–55.
[80] Cf. Aristotle's anecdote about Xenophanes and the citizens of Elea, mentioned in Section 3a below.

veridical status of poetry (as opposed to other speech-genres) that is at issue so much as its effect on its audience.

The attacks on poets, along with the denial of direct divine-to-mortal communication and the non-anthropomorphic explanations for natural phenomena, are grist to the mill of scholars who grant Xenophanes a major role in the development towards a distinction between 'mythical' and 'rational' forms of explanation.[81] Of course, it is unlikely that he would have drawn the distinction in these terms, since the words *muthos* and *logos* were yet to attain such opposing connotations.[82] His recommendation at D59=B1.15 to hymn the god with 'auspicious *muthoi* and pure *logoi*' (εὐφήμοις μύθοις καὶ καθαροῖσι λόγοις) presupposes that *muthoi* are not all bad. Though he 'demythologises' hexameters in the sense that he strips them of supernatural content such as monsters and anthropomorphic gods, the stereotypical image of Xenophanes as a myth-busting, rational philosopher overlooks the ways in which he recognises and manipulates what might be regarded as song's irrational aspects. Most egregiously, the fragments hint at the possibility that songs can please or displease the single greatest deity. As far as we can tell, Homer and Hesiod are criticised for promoting impious beliefs as well as immoral behaviour. Xenophanes' own, positive hexameter statements seem designed as a benevolent counterpart to this influence. He uses formal features to imbue the natural world and his own god with the numinous grandeur that would have previously been reserved for anthropomorphic deities, in fragments that would hardly constitute a *logos* in the later sense of a 'rational argument'. Certainly, later philosophers would regard such formal features as repetition and word order (where the syntax is unaffected) as 'irrational' characteristics of song even if they are also prevalent in 'rational', philosophical prose.[83] In the Hellenistic period, this assumption could support the view that verse and poetry aimed at *psuchagogia*, 'enthralment' or literally 'soul-leading', prose and philosophy at *didaskalia*, 'teaching'.[84] But Xenophanes

[81] See n. 4 above.

[82] For a recent and learned overview of this topic, see R. Fowler (2011). Note how Hecataeus of Miletus fr. 1, in the sixth century, uses μυθέομαι and λόγος to refer, respectively, to his own purportedly plausible account and fanciful traditional stories, in the exact reverse of later usages.

[83] Philodemus, in *On Poems* Book 1, disputes the view that the excellence of poetry resides in its irrational sound, as opposed to its rational content (esp. Col. 175); his *On Music* 4 *passim* treats the non-linguistic components of music as irrational (ἄλογος). For these texts, see, respectively, the excellent editions of Janko (2000) and Delattre (2007). A roughly similar distinction between rational content and irrational form occurs at Demetrius *On Style* 183–6.

[84] For the clearest statement of this distinction, see Eratosthenes *ap.* Strabo 1.1.10; note also Polybius 1.56.10–12. For a good overview, see Gutzwiller (2010).

operated in a period before such a distinction and, if viewed in these terms, his hexameters are both didactic and psychagogic.

He may have desired to supplant certain explanations that had been provided by Homer and Hesiod, but this was not the only reason why hexameters were an appropriate medium, for he plays upon their traditional association with the divine. He alludes to the tradition of Muse-inspiration in order to illustrate the epistemological limitations of mortals. While *thespis aude*, as traditionally conceived, opened a perspective on the normally inaccessible magnitudes of the past, Xenophanes redirects this perspective towards the natural world and the single greatest god. The elegies, as we shall see, further Xenophanes' religious and ethical projects on the level of the more familiar, mortal realm.

3 Xenophanes' Elegies

Early Greek elegy appears to us as a more protean genre than early hexameter. In the case of the latter, Homer and Hesiod, from an early stage, seem to have been regarded as the key exemplars in the tradition, whereas for elegy, we lack such paradigmatic figures. The form spanned shorter poems, designed to be sung to the *aulos* at symposia, as well as longer narratives on historical and mythological matters, perhaps designed for performance at public festivals.[85] The surviving fragments cover diverse subject matter, from love and drinking, as we might expect from sympotic poetry (e.g. Mimnermus fr. 1 W; Xenophanes D59=B1; much of the Theognidean corpus), to the appropriate behaviour on the battlefield (Tyrtaeus frr. 10, 11 W), to the narrator's political achievements (e.g. Solon fr. 5). In recent decades, we have also come to know more about the longer historical/mythological type, since the publication in 1992 of a papyrus of Simonides' elegies on the battles of Platea and Artemisium (P. Oxy.LIX 3695) and in 2005 of a papyrus containing an elegy (P.Oxy.LXIX 4708), probably to be attributed to Archilochus, which describes Telephus' rout of the Achaeans.[86] Xenophanes (like Mimnermus, Tyrtaeus, and Simonides) was credited with composing elegies of both the shorter and

[85] West (1974) 10–13 identified eight performance contexts, but as Bowie (1986) showed, only two can be posited with confidence, the symposium and public festivals. All the same, West's list is a function of the wide variety of imagined scenarios in the surviving corpus. Bowie (2016) refines his earlier notion of the longer, public elegies, locating them more specifically in cultic contexts. For the content and function of early elegiac poetry more generally, see the overview of Aloni (2009) (largely summarising the more extensive Aloni and Iannucci [2007]).

[86] The 'new' Simonides was contained in West (1992) and discussed in Boedeker and Sider (2001). On the Archilochus poem, see Obbink (2006) and, on its relationship to epic, Swift (2012).

the longer type, if indeed the poem(s) on Colophon and Elea was in elegiacs.

Through such a diverse elegiac corpus one common thread, relevant to Xenophanes, is the mortal perspective of the narrator. We noted above that the hexameter performer commands the Muse(s) to sing, creating the possibility that his voice encompasses a divine perspective. By contrast, the elegiac singer 'is not a channel of direct divine vision'.[87] He may be a servant of the Muses (Theognis 769) and present his songs as their gifts (Archilochus fr. 1.2 W; Theognis 250; Solon fr. 13.51 W; Anacreon eleg. fr. 2.3 W), but he does not ask them for information. Instead, Solon prays to them for 'happiness from the blessed gods' (ὄλβον . . . πρὸς θεῶν μακάρων, fr. 13.2 W) and 'always to have good reputation among all men' (πρὸς ἁπάντων/ ἀνθρώπων αἰεὶ δόξαν ἔχειν ἀγαθήν, fr. 13.2–3 W). Their role seems to be to render elegies successful and enduring. The difference between epic and elegiac Muse-functions is best illustrated by Simonides' elegy in celebration of the battle of Platea (fr. 11 W), where the poet sets up a comparison between the glorious Danaans of the *Iliad* and the more recent Spartan victors of his own poem. Assuming the most widely accepted supplements to this fragmentary text, Simonides describes the Iliadic poet as having 'received the whole truth from the dark-haired Pierians' (ὅς παρ' ἰοπ]λοκάμων δέξατο Πιερίδ[ων/ πᾶσαν ἀλη]θείην, lines 16–17) before summoning the Muse as an 'ally' (κικλήισκω] σ'ἐπίκουρον ἐμοί, line 21) and bidding her to 'equip this sweet array of song' (ἔντυνο]ν καὶ τόνδ[ε μελ]ίφρονα κ[όσμον ἀο]ιδῆς, line 23) so that later 'someone will recall' (ἵνα τις [μνή]σεται, line 24) the men who fought for Sparta.[88] As Stehle points out, 'array' (*kosmos*), along with the words here translated as 'ally' and 'equip', is a militaristic image, implying that the verses are lined up like ranks of soldiers.[89] Homer required the Muse for the 'truth' of his account, but the elegist Simonides needs her not for the content but for the 'arrangement' of his song, and to ensure it will be remembered.

As we should expect, given his exclusion of direct divine-to-mortal communication, Xenophanes, like the other elegists, does not call upon the Muses to provide his subject matter, going so far as to relinquish them altogether. D66=B8 proffers an alternative basis for his narratorial

[87] Gagné (2013) 232. On this difference see also Edmunds (1985) and Ford (1985). On the divine perspective of the narrator of the *Iliad*, see Graziosi (2013).
[88] Translation here based on Sider (2001). [89] Stehle (2001) 108–14.

authority, one that is firmly restricted to the mortal perspective characteristic of elegy:

> ἤδη δ' ἑπτά τ' ἔασι καὶ ἑξήκοντ' ἐνιαυτοὶ
> βληστρίζοντες ἐμὴν φροντίδ' ἀν' Ἑλλάδα γῆν·
> ἐκ γενετῆς δὲ τότ' ἦσαν ἐείκοσι πέντε τε πρὸς τοῖς,
> εἴπερ ἐγὼ περὶ τῶνδ' οἶδα λέγειν ἐτύμως.
>
> Already seven and sixty years
> Have been tossing my thought about the Greek land;
> And from my birth there were then twenty years and five in addition to these,
> If I know how to speak truly about these things.

Although the conditional clause at the end of the fragment may undermine the speaker's credibility, the assertion of old age seems to be a positive, competitive gesture. Xenophanes is reported elsewhere as having commented on the alleged 154 years reached by the rival sage Epimenides (D5=B20), perhaps an incredulous or sarcastic remark given the satirical stance of the *Silloi*. The notion that 'old age' brings wisdom is conventional (cf. *Il.* 19.218–19), but the specific feature of a primary narrator announcing his age as a basis for his own authority is paralleled in particular among the other elegists.[90] The implication is that we should listen to what he says because it is based on vast and varied experience, gained through his longevity and his travels around the Greek world. Such an authority finds a basis in Xenophanes' epistemology (see Section 2a above): since there is no direct divine-to-mortal communication, the best we can do is to amass as many and as varied experiences as possible, for instance, tasting myriad foods in order to reach a more precise understanding of how sweet a thing is. Accordingly, Xenophanes here advertises the breadth of his experience as he does when reporting the beliefs of distant peoples, the Ethiopeans and Thracians (D13=B16).

If travel is the best way for mortals to acquire something approaching knowledge, Xenophanes' poetry in a sense acts as a substitute for this process. The poetic utterance is itself a journey in D64=B7.1: 'Now, then, I will proceed to another argument, and I will show the way' (νῦν αὖτ' ἄλλον ἔπειμι λόγον, δείξω δὲ κέλευθον). As Lesher writes, 'Both αὖτε ("again", "next") and ἄλλον ("another") suggest that this is but one of several stories being told, hence "yet another".'[91] Such a transitional

[90] Solon fr. 18; Simonides fr. 89 W and fr. 28 *FGE*. Even if these fragments are not genuinely Simonidean, they attest to the fact that he was thought of as being an aged figure within the broader tradition of antiquity.

[91] Lesher (1992) 78.

expression finds a number of parallels in early hexameter,[92] but perhaps closest of all is the formulaic line found at the end of several Homeric Hymns, σεῦ δ' ἐγὼ ἀρξάμενος μεταβήσομαι ἄλλον ἐς ὕμνον (e.g. *Ven.* 293), 'and I having started from you will move over to another song', which, like the Xenophanes fragment, employs the familiar metaphor of the 'path of song':[93] both the Xenophanean and the hymnic narrator present themselves as 'embarking on' or 'moving onto' another utterance. Xenophanes' line may be an adaptation specifically of the hymnic formula.[94] But in the Homeric οἶμη and the hymnic formula, the song itself is the journey on which the performer embarks, whereas here there is the sense that the audience are also travellers on the journey: the hymnic line addresses a deity, and announces a transition to a separate topic, but Xenophanes seems to address us, the mortal audience, and will 'show' us the 'way', implying that it is a way upon which we ourselves should embark: our experience of receiving this text is thus figured as a journey in which the well-travelled Xenophanes is our guide.

While his epistemology had undermined Muse-inspiration, in this case a further traditional means of asserting poetic authority, more characteristic of elegy than of hexameters, is vindicated, that is, by claiming to be experienced and well travelled. Specifically, Xenophanes in D66=B8 and D64=B7.1 conforms to the more widely attested type of the 'wandering poet', a type which also included the elegists, Mimnermus, Semonides and Tyrtaeus. I shall argue that this type can inform our understanding of the function of the two longest surviving passages of Xenophanes, D59=B1 and D61=B2, as well as our reading of the imagery of space and travel in some of the other elegiac fragments.

a Xenophanes as a 'Wandering Poet'

The subject of 'wandering poets' in Greek antiquity has been the focus of an important volume edited by Richard Hunter and Ian Rutherford, who take their cue from an observation by the anthropologist Mary Helms,

[92] Note *Epigoni* fr. 1 West, Νῦν αὖθ' ὁπλοτέρων ἀνδρῶν ἀρχώμεθα, Μοῦσαι, which West (2003b) 9–10 suggests is a transitional expression from the *Thebaid*; Hesiod *Op.* 106 Εἰ δ' ἐθέλεις, ἕτερόν τοι ἐγὼ λόγον ἐκκορυφώσω (where West [1978] *ad loc.* cites the Xenophanes line as a parallel).

[93] Note the etymology of οἶμη, 'song' from οἶμος, 'path' or 'way' (thus LSJ, Beekes [2010], Chantraine [1968] *s.v.*) and the exhaustive examples of journeying as a poetological metaphor in Nünlist (1998) 228–83 and as a metaphor more generally in Becker (1937).

[94] With Collins (2004) 147–51.

> 'that things, information, and experience acquired from distant places, being strange and different, have great potency, great supernatural power, and if attainable, increase the ideological power and political prestige of those who acquire them. Such attitudes underlie the activities of travellers and the influences accorded those who, as shaman-curers/scholars/priests/traders, may arrive at a given locale as learned and experienced "wise strangers from afar."'[95]

According to this principle, the outsider status of a traveller such as Xenophanes could contribute to his 'ideological power and social prestige'. Helms' description offers an explanation for the ubiquity of the metaphor of the journey,[96] and could moreover apply to the stories surrounding the lives of several early Greek poets, legendary wise men and mythical heroes. Orpheus came from Thrace, participated in the Argonautic expedition and, most famously, went as far as Hades and back. Aristeas of Proconnesus visited the Issedonians, the one-eyed Arimaspeans and the Hyperboreans in the far north. Epimenides came from Crete and purified Athens of the pollution from the massacre of the supporters of Cylon.[97] Such figures will provide a context against which to understand the characterisation of Parmenides and Empedocles' itinerant primary narrators. Especially pertinent to Xenophanes, however, are the travelling elegists who composed poetry recounting the foundation of, or offering constitutional advice to, particular *poleis*.[98] Mimnermus, from Ephesus, seems to have travelled (albeit not very far) to Smyrna and composed a poem on its foundation. Semonides of Amorgos is credited with a poem on the foundation of Samos. A well-attested tradition held that Tyrtaeus was originally from Athens, but the Spartans summoned him on the advice of an oracle to provide them with counsel in their war with the Messenians. Solon advised the Cypriot king Philocyprus to move the city of Aepeia, upon which the latter promptly followed his advice and

[95] Helms (1988) 263, quoted by Bachvarova (2009) 37 in Hunter and Rutherford (2009).

[96] See also D. Fowler (2000) 208–15 on this metaphor in ancient didactic poetry. Note the famous example of Hes. *Op.* 286–92, a passage whose rich ancient reception history is well discussed by Hunter (2014) 92–100. Further examples are collected by Becker (1937). See also, more generally, Montiglio (2000) (which surprisingly does not mention Xenophanes) and (2005), where it is argued (pp. 100–1) that Xenophanes restricted his 'wandering' to Sicily, but D66=B8 suggests he wandered further afield around the Greek world.

[97] Orpheus: e.g. Eur. *Alc.* 357–9, 962–71 (as Thracian who underwent a *katabasis*); Simon. 567; Pind *Pyth.* 4.176ff. (as Argonaut). Aristeas: Hdt. 4.13–16. Epimenides: e.g. Aristotle, *Athenaion Politeia* 1.1; Pl. *Leg.* 1.642d. For such figures, see West (1983) 3–7, 39–61 and, on Aristeas and Epimenides, the entries in *BNJ*.

[98] For the genre of historical elegy, see n. 11 above. See also d'Alessio (2009) for the phenomenon of local identities being defined by foreign poets and, more generally, Martin (1993) for the tendency of Greek sources to present sages as offering practical, political advice.

renamed it *Soloi* in the Athenian's honour. This is the context for Solon fr. 19 W, which wishes Philocyprus well whilst at the same time advertising the author's alien status by praying for a safe *nostos*.[99] Whether or not we accept the historicity of all these details, their recurrence, both in the internal evidence of certain surviving fragments and in the ancient biographical traditions, attests to the familiarity of this pattern – of wise men in general, but elegists in particular, travelling to an alien *polis* to provide advice and praise – within the Greek imagination.[100]

The stories about Xenophanes clearly conform to this pattern: having travelled westwards across the Greek world, he composed a lengthy elegy on the foundation of Elea and, according to the *testimonia*, travelled to Zancle in Sicily and spent time at the court of Hieron of Syracuse (Plut. *Reg. et imp. apophth.* 4 175C=P13=A11). Diogenes Laertius even claims that he was thought to have been sold as a slave (9.20), a detail which further contributes to the picture of him as an authoritative outsider, just as Aesop and Plato (Diog. Laert. 3.19) were at times said to be slaves.[101] Aristotle preserves an anecdote which shows that Xenophanes was not only thought of as a celebrant of these destinations, but also a source of civic counsel (*Rhet.* 2.23.1399b6–8=P17=A13). The citizens of Elea reportedly asked him whether they should sacrifice to Leucothea, to which he responded in a manner consistent with his celebrated rejection of anthropomorphic deities: 'if they thought she was a goddess they should not mourn her and if they thought she was human they should not sacrifice to her'.[102] While these anecdotes may be of little value for piecing together Xenophanes' actual biography, they nevertheless draw upon details found in the fragments themselves and attest to how his narratorial persona was received later in antiquity. His travels are most conspicuous in D66=B8 but are also implicit when we consider the poem on the foundation of Elea, at the extreme West of the Greek world, in the context of his Eastern, Colophonian identity.[103] The poet's travels are not merely a potentially

[99] Mimnermus' *Smyrneis*: frr. 13, 13a, with West (1974) 74 and Bowie (1986) 28–30. Tyrtaeus as an Athenian: Plato *Leg.* 1.692a–b, with schol. *ad loc.*; Lycurg. *in Leocr.* 106; Philodemus *de Mus.* 4 Col. 73 Delattre; Diod. Sic. 8.27.1–2; Paus. 4.15.6; Plut. *apophth. Lac.* 230d; with d'Alessio (2009) 154–5. On Solon fr. 19 and the tradition of itinerant sages, see Irwin (2005) 147–54.

[100] On the methodological principle of using ancient biography as a source of ancient interpretations of authors, even though their factual content may be incredible, see Introduction n. 2 above.

[101] For an investigation of the figure of Aesop within the context of itinerant sages, see Kurke (2010) 95–158. See also Martin (1992) for depictions of the outsider, or *metanastes*, as a figure of didactic authority.

[102] For an analysis of the argument of this anecdote, see Warren (2013).

[103] His Colophonian identity underlies D62=B3, which criticises the Colophonians for acquiring an indulgent taste for luxuries from the Lydians, and also D54=B22, which gives advice to an Ionian, probably Colophonian, addressee on appropriate sympotic conversation.

spurious detail from later biographies of the poet but a cultivated feature of the *persona loquens*.

One feature of the wandering sage-poet is that he provides civic advice to ensure a harmonious community. Foreign poets are often represented as acting as mediators in times of civic strife.[104] Such a mediator from outside of the *polis* had the benefit of impartiality. Furthermore, sage-poets tend to offer advice on the foundation of new colonies. Thus, Solon helped with the foundation of *Soloi*, and Xenophanes, in Aristotle's anecdote, is presented as helping with the establishment of Elea. Such new colonies required the institution of new cults and festivals.[105] Xenophanes may have been thought to have assisted in this process at Elea precisely because of his poem on the foundation of the colony. D61=B2 and D59=B1 can be regarded as part of the civic advice delivered by the wandering sage-poet, designed to entrench particular values that help to forge a harmonious community.

b D61=B2

ἀλλ᾽ εἰ μὲν ταχυτῆτι ποδῶν νίκην τις ἄροιτο
ἢ πενταθλεύων, ἔνθα Διὸς τέμενος
πὰρ Πίσαο ῥοῆισ᾽ ἐν Ὀλυμπίηι, εἴτε παλαίων
ἢ καὶ πυκτοσύνην ἀλγινόεσσαν ἔχων,
εἴτε τι δεινὸν ἄεθλον ὃ παγκράτιον καλέουσιν,
ἀστοῖσίν κ᾽ εἴη κυδρότερος προσορᾶν
καί κε προεδρίην φανερὴν ἐν ἀγῶσιν ἄροιτο
καί κεν σῖτ᾽ εἴη δημοσίων κτεάνων
ἐκ πόλεως καὶ δῶρον ὅ οἱ κειμήλιον εἴη·
εἴτε καὶ ἵπποισιν, ταῦτά κε πάντα λάχοι –
οὐκ ἐὼν ἄξιος ὥσπερ ἐγώ. ῥώμης γὰρ ἀμείνων
ἀνδρῶν ἠδ᾽ ἵππων ἡμετέρη σοφίη.
ἀλλ᾽ εἰκῆι μάλα τοῦτο νομίζεται, οὐδὲ δίκαιον
προκρίνειν ῥώμην τῆς ἀγαθῆς σοφίης.
οὔτε γὰρ εἰ πύκτης ἀγαθὸς λαοῖσι μετείη

[104] See d'Alessio (2009) 155–6, who cites anecdotes about Tyrtaeus, Terpander, Thaletas, Stesichorus and Pindar.

[105] See Dougherty (1993) 21–4, *BNP s.v. apoikia* and, most extensively, Malkin (1987) 135–86. The *oikistes*, the founder of the colony, is often depicted as determining some of these matters, such as the establishment of temples and cults. Note the examples of the story of Nausithous' foundation of Phaeacia at *Od.* 6.7–10 and Pindar's account of Battus' establishment of altars and processions as part of the foundation of Cyrene (*Pyth.* 5.89–93). More generally, we hear reports of the legendary law-givers, Zaleucus and Charondas, establishing constitutions for the colonies of *Magna Graecia* (Pl. *Resp*. 599d–e; Arist. *Pol.* 2.12.1274aff.). Charondas seems to have been roughly contemporary with Xenophanes (see *OCD*[4] *s.v.*).

οὔτ' εἰ πενταθλεῖν οὔτε παλαισμοσύνην,
οὐδὲ μὲν εἰ ταχυτῆτι ποδῶν, τόπερ ἐστὶ πρότιμον
ῥώμης ὅσσ' ἀνδρῶν ἔργ' ἐν ἀγῶνι πέλει,
τοὔνεκεν ἂν δὴ μᾶλλον ἐν εὐνομίηι πόλις εἴη.
σμικρὸν δ' ἄν τι πόλει χάρμα γένοιτ' ἐπὶ τῶι,
εἴ τις ἀεθλεύων νικῶι Πίσαο παρ' ὄχθας·
οὐ γὰρ πιαίνει ταῦτα μυχοὺς πόλεως.

But if someone were to win a victory through swiftness of feet
Or through competing in the pentathlon, where there is the precinct of Zeus
By the streams of Pisa in Olympia, or wrestling
Or, further, participating in the painful art of boxing,
Or even in the terrible competition which they call the *pankration*,
Then, for the citizens, he would be more glorious to look upon
And he would win a conspicuous, privileged seat in the contests
And there would be food out of the people's property
From the city and a gift which would be an heirloom for him;
Or also with horses, he would attain all these things –
Not being worthy as I am. For better than the strength
Of men and horses is our wisdom.
But this custom is completely random, nor is it just
To prefer strength to good wisdom.
For not if there were a good boxer among the people
Nor if he were good at the pentathlon, or in wrestling,
Nor indeed with swiftness of foot – which is the most honoured
Of all the deeds in the contest of men's strength –
Would the city therefore be more in good order.
The city would gain little pleasure from him,
If someone competing wins a victory by the banks of Pisa
For these things do not fatten the city's cellars.

It is unclear whether we have the start of the poem. The adversative ἀλλ' appears to assume that something has come before the first sentence. However, other Archaic elegiac fragments that may contain the openings of the poem begin with such connectives,[106] and the fragment, as Faraone has shown, is roughly symmetrical: lines 13–22 act as a counterpoint to 1–12 and form a ring structure with the list of sports recurring in reverse order in the latter section, albeit with the absence of the *pankration*.[107] Moreover, the opening conditional clause, listing the rewards of athletic victors and

[106] Cf. e.g. Tyrtaeus frr. 10, 11 W; Solon fr. 15 W.

[107] A detail which leads Faraone (2008) 124–5, following Weil (1862), to posit a lacuna before line 15. Such a lacuna would be paralleled in Athenaeus' other quotations and is supported by the fact that that the *pankration*, unlike the other sports that are mentioned in the first stanza, does not recur in ring structure in the second.

capped with the claim that they are not so worthy as the narrator's wisdom, functions as a priamel, a standard means of opening an Archaic Greek song.[108] The fragment as we have it, then, may be a complete (or nearly complete) song.

The priamel can be a means of presenting an idea as running counter to cultural expectations: a thesis is presented in contrast to popular assumptions, which then has to be demonstrated in the following passage. In the most famous example, Sappho fr. 16, the narrator's thesis, that 'what one loves' is the finest thing, is presented in contrast to opinions of others who believe the finest thing to be cavalry or infantry or a naval fleet; this then has to be demonstrated in the subsequent stanza with the example of Helen.[109] But a closer parallel to Xenophanes, both metrically and thematically, is the opening of Tyrtaeus' lengthy fr. 12 W, where the narrator 'would not mention or take account of a man' (οὔτ' ἂν μνησαίμην οὔτ' ἐν λόγωι ἄνδρα τιθείην, line 1) for prowess in running or wrestling, or for size, strength, speed, beauty, richness, regality, eloquence or for reputation for anything (lines 1–9) except furious valour (θούριδος ἀλκῆς, line 9); for a man is not good in war unless he can bear to see bloody slaughter and lunge at the enemy whilst standing close in the ranks (lines 10–12).[110] This, says Tyrtaeus, is virtue and the best and finest prize for a young man (ἥδ' ἀρετή, τόδ' ἄεθλον ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ἄριστον/ κάλλιστόν τε φέρειν γίνεται ἀνδρὶ νέωι, lines 13–14), and the brave man is a common good to the city and to all the people (ξυνὸν δ' ἐσθλὸν τοῦτο πόληΐ τε παντί τε δήμωι, line 15). Like Xenophanes, Tyrtaeus delineates the particular virtue that he claims to be most valuable to the *polis* in opposition to commonly praised attributes. Indeed, some of those attributes (strength, speed, appearance; the wrestling mentioned by Tyrtaeus is a similar sport to Xenophanes' *pankration*) are the same as those of Xenophanes' Olympic victors. It is possible that Tyrtaeus' passage came from the song that would become known, from at least the time of Aristotle, as the *Eunomia* (frr. 1–4 W), given that its apparent function is in part to establish good conventions for a *polis*.[111] Xenophanes' song, too, ostensibly provides principles under which a *polis* can be in a situation of *eunomia* or 'good order' (line 19).

[108] On the form of the priamel, see Race (1982) (who discusses this fragment as an example, pp. 59–62) and Bundy (1962) *passim*.

[109] The contrast is marked with the extended μὲν . . . δὲ clause (lines 1–3 ο]ἱ μὲν . . . οἱ δὲ . . . οἱ δὲ and ἔγω δὲ). See Page (1955) 55–6. Note the other similar example of Pind. *Ol.* 1.1ff.

[110] The similarity was noted by Jaeger (1932), who argued that Xenophanes was clearly influenced by Tyrtaeus; Marcovich (1978) 24–5 is more sceptical of the possibility.

[111] On this function of the *Eunomia*, see d'Alessio (2009) 150–6.

The parallels are such that direct allusion is possible.[112] Xenophanes D61=B2 could be seen as a 'correction' or updating of Tyrtaeus' position: the erroneous popular praise does not go to the more general attributes listed by Tyrtaeus but to the victors of the Olympic games. Even if we rule out the possibility of direct allusion and explain the similarities as due to shared usage of a common form, the Tyrtaeus passage is a close typological parallel and can be taken as evidence of the way in which Xenophanes could have used this form but chose not to. The virtue that is most beneficial to the *polis*, that provides *eunomia*, is not bravery but wisdom. It is notable in this regard that the exempla that Tyrtaeus uses come from myth – the strong man 'has the size and strength of the Cyclopes'; the swift one 'beats Thracian Boreas' – whilst those of Xenophanes are Olympic victors. His less elevated tone thus imbues his sentiments with a greater sense of realism and is consistent with the idea that mythical monsters are mere 'fabrications' (D59=B1.23).

The typological parallel with Tyrtaeus can be taken further. As we have seen, both poets were regarded as foreign arrivals to the cities they advised. Tyrtaeus' poems seem to have played a role in the development of Sparta's reputation as a city that prided itself on its martial success.[113] Within this context, Xenophanes' poem can be read as performing a similar role in the entrenchment of a particular ideology in the *polis* to which he arrived. The first-person singular of D59=B1.11 has been taken as evidence that this fragment presents a distinctive Xenophanean voice, whilst the first-person plural at 1.12 is often translated as a plural for singular.[114] However, under re-performance, perhaps at Eleatic symposia, any singer could assume the identity of the narrator.[115] The lack of a *sphragis*, or any specific autobiographical details, would facilitate this possibility.[116] The shift from singular ἐγώ to plural ἡμετέρη σοφίη seems

[112] For a defence of such intertextual readings in early Greek elegy, see Irwin (2005) 19–29, *contra* R. Fowler (1987) 20–33.

[113] On this issue, see Irwin (2005) 19–34, who stresses the generic, widely applicable nature of Tyrtaeus' sentiments, but even so, from the perspective of his ancient reception, his martial exhortations certainly facilitated Sparta's distinctive reputation as a warrior society.

[114] It is translated as singular, e.g. by Gerber's Loeb edition of early Greek elegy (1999). Ford (2002) 50–2 sees the fragment as an advertisement for Xenophanes' wisdom.

[115] On this feature of the performance of sympotic poetry, see, most recently, Bakker (2017a). On the question of the 'I' in Archaic lyric more generally, note the nuanced discussion of Slings (1990). Xenophanes B2 fits into the third type of personal 'I' distinguished by Slings, in which the 'I' expresses an opinion, but where no appeal to action is expressed, in which cases, Slings argues, the 'I' is supposed to be representative of a group.

[116] Contrast Theognis' *Sphragis* (19–30); Solon's autobiographical statements at frr. 1, 5, 19, and his geographical references that mark the narrator as Athenian at frr. 2 and 4.

significant: 'our wisdom' could assert the collective wisdom of the sympotic group, or even the *polis* as a whole. Such a significant shift would appear to be paralleled elsewhere in elegy.[117]

Given the Panhellenic significance of the Olympic games, the fragment could serve to define the identity of a particular *polis* against that of other Greek states. One might even argue that the poem achieved some measure of success in the promotion of the value of wisdom at Elea, since the city would become most famous for the 'Eleatic school' of philosophy, of which Xenophanes was known as the founder.[118] Modern scholars deny that this should be taken to mean that Xenophanes founded a formal institution, but he certainly influenced the famous philosophers from the city.[119] At any rate, the poem concerns both the narrator's status as a wise man and promotes particular civic values in the very literal sense of what a particular *polis* should value (lines 6–9). In this respect, it conforms to the type of the authoritative wanderers identified above.

c D59=B1

D59=B1 presents an image of sympotic song, but although the symposium is often thought of as an inherently confined locus for an elite *hetaireia* ('brotherhood' or 'male clique'),[120] Xenophanes' poem can also be read as offering civic advice more generally, in particular on the avoidance of *stasis*.

νῦν γὰρ δὴ ζάπεδον καθαρὸν καὶ χεῖρες ἁπάντων
καὶ κύλικες· πλεκτοὺς δ' ἀμφιτιθεῖ στεφάνους,
ἄλλος δ' εὐῶδες μύρον ἐν φιάληι παρατείνει·
κρατὴρ δ' ἕστηκεν μεστὸς εὐφροσύνης,
ἄλλος δ' οἶνος ἕτοιμος, ὃς οὔποτέ φησι προδώσειν,
μείλιχος ἐν κεράμοισ' ἄνθεος ὀζόμενος·

[117] Cf. Gagné (2013) 226–49, who argues that the shift from singular to plural first-person statements in Solon fr. 13 W (the *Elegy to the Muses*) marks a shift from individual to group sentiments. On the significance of σοφίη as 'wisdom', rather than more specifically poetic skill, see Marcovich (1978) 21–2.

[118] Pl. *Soph.* 242d=R1<A29, Clem. Al. *Strom.* 1.64.2=R3<DKA8, Theod. *Cur.* 4.5=R11<DKA36.

[119] To list some well-known correspondences: in Parmenides D8>B8, what-is is described as singular (D8.11=B8.6 ἕν), just as Xenophanes' god is εἷς (D16=B23); it is οὐλομελές (D8.9=B8.4), as Xenophanes' god is οὖλος (D17=B24); Xenophanes' god does not move (D19=B26), just as Parmenides' entity is ἀκίνητον (D8.32=B8.26); like Xenophanes' god, it is defined largely by what it is not: in D8>B8, nine lines begin with negatives that negate attributes of what-is, similarly to the negatives in D16=B23.2 and D19=B26.2. For scepticism over Xenophanes' 'Eleatic school', see e.g. KRS 165–6; Graham (2010) 95.

[120] Thus, Ford (2002) 65; Murray (1993) 207–13; Stehle (1997) 213–62.

ἐν δὲ μέσοισ᾽ ἁγνὴν ὀδμὴν λιβανωτὸς ἵησι·
ψυχρὸν δ᾽ ἔστιν ὕδωρ καὶ γλυκὺ καὶ καθαρόν·
πάρκεινται δ᾽ ἄρτοι ξανθοὶ γεραρή τε τράπεζα
τυροῦ καὶ μέλιτος πίονος ἀχθομένη·
βωμὸς δ᾽ ἄνθεσιν ἀν τὸ μέσον πάντηι πεπύκασται,
μολπὴ δ᾽ ἀμφὶς ἔχει δώματα καὶ θαλίη.
χρὴ δὲ πρῶτον μὲν θεὸν ὑμνεῖν εὔφρονας ἄνδρας
εὐφήμοις μύθοις καὶ καθαροῖσι λόγοις·
σπείσαντας δὲ καὶ εὐξαμένους τὰ δίκαια δύνασθαι
πρήσσειν – ταῦτα γὰρ ὧν ἐστι προχειρότερον –
οὐχ ὕβρις πίνειν ὁπόσον κεν ἔχων ἀφίκοιο
οἴκαδ᾽ ἄνευ προπόλου μὴ πάνυ γηραλέος.
ἀνδρῶν δ᾽ αἰνεῖν τοῦτον ὃς ἐσθλὰ πιὼν ἀναφαίνει,
ὥς οἱ μνημοσύνη καὶ τὸν ὃς ἀμφ᾽ ἀρετῆς.
οὔτι μάχας διέπειν Τιτήνων οὐδὲ Γιγάντων
οὐδέ <τε> Κενταύρων, πλάσματα τῶν προτέρων,
ἢ στάσιας σφεδανάς, τοῖσ᾽ οὐδὲν χρηστὸν ἔνεστι·
θεῶν <δὲ> προμηθείην αἰὲν ἔχειν ἀγαθόν.

For now indeed the floor is pure and the hands of all
And the cups; one person puts on woven garlands,
And another proffers the sweet-smelling unguent into the saucer;
The mixing-bowl stands full of good cheer,
And another wine is ready, which says it will never betray us,
A soothing one in the clay jars, smelling of flowers;
And in the midst incense sends forth its holy smell;
And the water is cool and sweet and pure;
And yellow loaves lie nearby and the table is majestic
Loaded with cheese and fat honey;
And the altar, in the middle, is covered thickly with flowers,
And song and celebration surround the house.
And it is necessary first for well-minded men to sing of the god
With auspicious speeches and pure words;
And having poured libations and having prayed to be able to accomplish just things,
(For these are more appropriate)
It is not insolent to drink so much that, being in such a state, you can still come
Home without a guide, if you are not completely old.
And, of men, praise the one who, when drinking, reveals noble thoughts
According to his memory, and the one who [*sc.* speaks] about virtue.
And do not go through the fights of Titans or Giants
Or Centaurs, fabrications of earlier generations,
Or violent civic strife, in which there is no use at all.
But always have good forethought about the gods.

The fact that this fragment begins *in medias res* – with the causal γάρ lacking a protasis – has led some to suggest that we lack the opening of the poem. Such a beginning, however, seems paralleled elsewhere in elegy,[121] and could be rhetorically effective as the opening of a poem: the initial deictic νῦν has the inclusive effect of inviting the listeners to imagine themselves as already part of the sympotic group once the song has begun. The effect would be enhanced if the audience has in fact recently cleansed their hands in preparation for the symposium.[122] As in the case of B2, Faraone has demonstrated that this fragment is divided into two roughly equal parts: the first half is descriptive in form whilst the second is parenetic; the linguistic purity called for in the latter acts as a counterpoint to the physical and ritual purity described in the former.[123] Whether or not we accept Faraone's wider thesis that early Greek elegy was composed in stanzas, the fragment displays a neat, symmetrical structure.

Now, the voices of sympotic narrators are often distinctive: the poetic *ego* of Alcaeus or Solon is a specific figure in particular historical and geographical circumstances; Anacreon and Theognis may be more generic and imitable, but the former is strongly associated with lustful and bibulous behaviour, the latter with aristocratic ideology.[124] This song, however, lacks any first-person statements or descriptions to specify its narrator. As with other sympotic songs, the rhetoric seems designed to enhance the sense of solidarity among the symposiasts,[125] but the positive details specified are generic. The mixing cup, a potential source of disharmonious drunkenness, is full of 'good cheer'. An anonymous participant, probably a slave, accommodatingly offers perfume in a small vase and even the wine seems amicable, saying, in its personification, that it will not 'give up' – προδώσειν, a verb which may also evoke its other sense of 'betray',[126] a possibility which would further emphasise the harmony of the group.

[121] See n. 106 above.

[122] See Hobden (2013) 22–65 for a study of the 'metasympotic' nature of the symposium, that is, the way in which, 'representations of the symposion at the symposion in song and image construct visions of the event that set out a persuasive view of sympotic performance and communicate ideas' (22). As she observes, 'metasympotic songs afforded symposiasts opportunities for self-styling, and for the styling of others too'.

[123] Faraone (2008) 116–20, *contra* Bowra (1938) 353 and Marcovich (1978) 4.

[124] Cf. similarly, d'Alessio (2009) 151 on Tyrtaeus. On the principle that the personae of Archaic Greek poetic narrators are typically distinctive, see Morrison (2007) 57–67.

[125] This truism of the symposium and its poetry has been studied in detail by e.g. Rösler (1980b); part 1 of Schmitt Pantel (1992); Stehle (1997) 213–62; Hobden (2013) 117–56.

[126] Ford (2002) 57 identifies such a pun, citing the Attic skolia 907 and 908 *PMG* as parallels, and pointing out that ἕτοιμος, which can mean 'trusty' (see LSJ *s.v.*) also has such a personifying force.

When read within a civic context, ἐν δὲ μέσοισ' takes on a particular significance: it can refer not only to the literal, spatial centre of the group, but also to the symbolic 'middle ground' where different armies or political parties meet, frequently the location for rhetorical or martial contest.[127] That such an area should be suffused with a 'holy odour' may therefore symbolise civic harmony. The description appeals to the different senses, drawing on smell (εὐῶδες . . . ἁγνὴν ὀδμήν), taste (γλυκύ . . . μέλιτος), touch (ψυχρόν) and sound (μολπή) as well as setting out a visual image of the scene. The *andrōn* ('male banqueting-hall') almost becomes a *locus amoenus* with cool water and flowers. There is nothing in this evocative opening description to distinguish the group with any particularity: by contrast with many other sympotic poems, it does not define the sympotic group against any other faction.[128] Potentially any free male could picture himself participating in the scene.

By contrast, the second half of the fragment introduces the iconoclastic criticism of certain traditional subjects for song. The form reflects that this is a novel sentiment, for the gnomic instructions (χρή with the infinitives) leave open the possibility that they are not yet being followed: Xenophanes tells us that it is necessary to hymn the god; he does not describe this as already being done. Although the stanza features the conventional sentiment that symposiasts ought not to drink too much, its main emphasis concerns the appropriate subject matter for sympotic song. This emphasis is created first by the way in which the details outlined in the first stanza conclude with μολπή, as the first word of the final line and then by the fact that the first gnomic statement that opens the second half concerns hymning the god (line 14) and finally by the fact that song, and positive speech in general, occupies the majority of the second half of the fragment. Whilst the descriptions of the first half and the instructions concerning justice and drinking (18–19) appeal to conventional sympotic sentiments, the exclusion of stories of titans, giants and centaurs – occasional subject matter for hexameters – seems novel. This novelty is illustrated by the expression πλάσματα τῶν προτέρων (D59=B1.23), which, as Ford writes, 'invidiously adapts a traditional epic expression for oral traditions about

[127] Cf. LSJ *s.v.* μέσος IIIb; see further Barker (2009) 17–19. The political connotations of Xenophanes' use of this term are well discussed by Svenbro (1984) 83–91.

[128] Many of Alcaeus' sympotic fragments seem designed to unite the sympotic group against a political opponent (frr. 50, 70, 72, 332; perhaps also 170, 206, 207, 335, 338 L.-P.), whilst the elegies of the Theognidean corpus characteristically define the sympotic group as aristocratic against others, often those who may be wealthy but ignoble (e.g. 27–38, 39–52, 53–68, 69–72, 101–12, 149–50, 153–4, 161–4, 183–92, 193–6, 227–32, 283–6, 287–92, 333–4, 341–50, 367–70, 373–400, 523–6 etc.).

the glorious deeds of heroes, "fames of men of long ago" (κλεῖα προτέρων ἀνθρώπων)'.[129] The rhetoric of this fragment, however, functions by showing that the novel idea is in fact an entailment of conventionally accepted sentiments. The recurrence of the vocabulary of purity (καθαρόν ... καθαροῖσι λόγοις) and 'good-thinking' (ἐυφροσύνης ... εὔφρονας ἄνδρας) implies that the pure speech is entailed by the conventional understanding of sympotic purity outlined in the first half.

The fragment thus appeals to and manipulates accepted cultural schemata to advance a novel precept concerning the subject matter of song, a feature which is encapsulated by a pun in the final line. As Collins points out, προμηθείην, whilst ostensibly used simply in its literal sense of 'forethought', can be read as alluding to the name of Prometheus.[130] The allusion harnesses the myth of Prometheus to illustrate the poem's call to piety. Prometheus, at least in the Hesiodic versions, was named ironically: he may have had greater forethought than his brother Epimetheus, but he still could not predict the deception of Zeus (*Theog.* 507–34; *Op.* 47–105). He may therefore appear here as a negative paradigm: we must have the forethought for the gods which Prometheus lacked and shun anything that may be impious, including potentially impious speech.

The mythical figures invoked (Titans, Giants, Centaurs, Prometheus) are those of Panhellenic myth and seemingly not of significance to a more particular locale as we sometimes find elsewhere in elegy.[131] Indeed, we might wonder why these specific subjects should be excluded from the symposium when, at least on the basis of the surviving evidence, they do not seem to have been typical subjects for sympotic song. When read within the wider context of Xenophanes' criticism of the canonical poems of Homer and Hesiod, the exclusion of these myths from the *Symposium* seems to serve as a synecdoche for the wider-scale exclusion of such narratives from the ideal *polis*, or even the Greek world as a whole. The political vocabulary of betrayal (προδώσειν) and civic strife (στάσιας σφεδανάς) and the middle ground (ἐν δὲ μέσοισ') refer in the first instance to the internal harmony of the sympotic group, but also evoke the risk of wider-scale political unrest in the *polis* as a whole. The language of purity also contributes to this picture, especially if we read this fragment alongside D66=B8, since itinerant sages could provide purification for bloodshed

[129] Ford (2002) 57–8. Cf. *Theog.* 100; *Il.* 9.189; *hApollo* 160. [130] Collins (2004) 150.

[131] Note Tyrtaeus' references to the Spartans as descendants of Herakles (frr. 2, 11.1 W), and Solon's references to Athena as the patron goddess of Athens (fr. 4.1–4 W), and to Cypris in a poem on the foundation of Soloi in Cyprus (fr. 19.4 W).

arising from factional strife. Although the symposium is often the location for an elite group that defines itself in opposition to a rival faction or ideology, Xenophanes' poem appropriates the political and ideological connotations of sympotic elegy to advance a message of relevance to a broader citizen body. A key aspect of that advice involves the avoidance of *stasis*-inducing song.

4 Xenophanean Elegies and Xenophanean Hexameters

The longest elegiac fragments are inextricably embedded in the immediate world of the *polis*: D59=B1 concerns the appropriate behaviour for avoiding *stasis* in the symposium and, by extension, the *polis* as a whole, whilst D59=B1 more explicitly pronounces a statement on what practices the *polis* should value. In doing so, these fragments conform to the image of Xenophanes' elegiac persona as a 'wandering sage-poet' made most explicit in D66=B8. When read within the wider context of Xenophanes' epistemology, this traditional model of authority gains some support: his travels and longevity have provided varied experiences that allow him to make judgements based on a wide range of data and to realise the cultural contingency of certain Greek beliefs. But the epistemological implications of what might be termed Xenophanes' cultural relativism, at least in the surviving fragments, seem confined to the hexameter fragments: it is only in hexameters that Xenophanes expresses the impossibility of knowing when one has 'hit the mark' with one's speech. The assertions made in the elegies, with the exception of the aged narrator's self-doubt at D66=B8.4, seem more confident.

This contrast between the hexameter and the elegiac perspectives is evident from the elegiac D69=B6:

> πέμψας γὰρ κωλῆν ἐρίφου σκέλος ἤραο πῖον
> ταύρου λαρινοῦ, τίμιον ἀνδρὶ λαχεῖν,
> τοῦ κλέος Ἑλλάδα πᾶσαν ἐφίξεται οὐδ' ἀπολήξει,
> ἔστ' ἂν ἀοιδάων ἦι γένος Ἑλλαδικῶν.
>
> For having sent the thighbone of a kid you received the rich leg
> Of a fatted bull, a valuable thing for a man to attain,
> Whose glory will reach the whole of Greece and will not cease,
> For as long as there is a tribe of Greek singers.

The fragment seems to be addressed to a patron. In sending only the thighbone of a kid, the patron has received good value for money in attaining the leg of a fatted bull, most likely a metaphor for Xenophanes'

song.[132] Its *kleos* or 'reputation' will match Xenophanes' own wanderings, in travelling via the network of itinerant poets to 'reach all Greece' and to persist 'as long as there is a tribe of Greek singers'. This sentiment is closely paralleled by Theognis 237–54 and may be conventional. In the Theognis passage, the narrator's song is said to have given Cyrnus wings, so that he shall never lose his *kleos* (245) but shall 'roam across the land of Greece and among the islands' (καθ' Ἑλλάδα γῆν στρωφώμενος, ἠδ' ἀνὰ νήσους, 247), and will be a subject 'for all who care about song, even for future generations, for as long as earth and sun exist' (πᾶσι δ', ὅσοισι μέμηλε, καὶ ἐσσομένοισιν ἀοιδή/ ἔσσηι ὁμῶς, ὄφρ' ἂν γῆ τε καὶ ἠέλιος, 251–2). In both cases, the spatial extent of the song's *kleos* travels specifically over the Greek land and, chronologically, will endure for as long as there are Greek singers. In comparison with Theognis, Xenophanes' claims for the *kleos* of his song are relatively humble. The relative humility of Xenophanes' claim is even more stark by comparison with an epic passage that may underlie both passages, *Od.* 9.19–20, where Odysseus reveals his name to the conspicuously non-Greek Phaeacians and is able to boast that his κλέος reaches heaven (*Od.* 9.19–20), emphatically the only point in the poem at which a character refers to their own κλέος in the first person and a claim that is vindicated by the wider narrative, since the gods do indeed talk about him.[133] The *kleos* of Xenophanes' poem, by contrast, seems limited to the Greek world. Of course, the rhetorical function of this fragment depends upon an emphasis on the magnitude of these chronological and spatial limits. But what counts as a vast extent in this elegiac fragment (i.e. the Greek world) is not so vast from the perspective of the world of epic, which often adopts a perspective that goes beyond the boundaries of the Greek world. More pertinently, it is not so vast from the perspective of Xenophanes' own hexameters (D14=B15; D13=B16), which reveal the contingency of Greek beliefs. This tension between D69=B6 and Xenophanes' cultural relativism is explicable in terms of the different functions of the fragments – the hexameters are didactic and also satirical of certain beliefs; this elegy is encomiastic – but the tension also derives from the different perspectives typically assumed by epic and elegiac narrators.

[132] Martin (2009) 97 sees Xenophanes' 'thighbone of a kid' as abuse of the stinginess of his addressee, but the emphasis falls less on the meagreness of the thighbone than on the greatness of the 'fatted bull'. I therefore prefer to see this as stressing the good value for money the patron has received.

[133] On these lines see Segal (1983) and Goldhill (1991) 25–6. The relevance of this passage to Theognis is pointed out by Campbell (1982) 363. Note the similarity of expression: both Odysseus and Cyrnus have *kleos* and are (or shall be) a 'concern' (μέλω/μελήσεις) for men.

It is not only in their metre and performance context, then, that Xenophanes' hexameters and elegies participate in different genres. Epic and elegiac perspectives occupy different epistemic statuses. Hexameter poetry, in requiring the knowledge of the Muses to recount events prior to any living or documented memory, demanded either a leap of faith or a suspension of disbelief on the part of the bard and the audience, unlike the elegies which, for the most part, concerned the familiar, present-day world of mortals. The audience of Xenophanes' D59=B1 could tell from personal experience whether its descriptions conformed to typical or possible sympotic practices. Poets of the mythological material typical of hexameter poetry were restricted by clear and present realities to a far lesser degree. This is one reason why hexameter accounts of gods and heroes attracted allegorical interpretations throughout antiquity, whereas no such extravagant interpretations are attested for elegies.[134] The distance of epic's objects of reference allowed interpreters to posit a gap between what was said and what was meant. This difference of epistemic status also explains why the Xenophanean fragments classified by scholars as the most 'philosophical' are the ones that are in hexameters: they inhabit the more speculative realm of myth, even if their explanations no longer depend on the arbitrary actions of anthropomorphic agents. In this respect, the hexameter genre provided Xenophanes with a way of thinking about – and encouraging his audience to think about – the big questions concerning the origins of the universe, the nature of the divine and the limitations of mortal understanding, whereas elegies provided a way to implement the ethical consequences of those thoughts on a practical level.

5 Conclusion

A recent and extensive discussion of the issue has argued that '[v]erse . . . was not essential to Xenophanes' message'.[135] This may be trivially true in the sense that, like any verse text, it has semantic content that can be paraphrased in prose. But Xenophanes' metres and other formal features participate in particular generic traditions through which they convey a 'message' in at least three respects. First, they imply certain claims, such as that the single god is worthy of hymnic veneration. Second, they contribute to emotive effects, for instance, in D61=B2, by conjuring a sense

[134] Though occasionally they use metaphors and fables that could be counted as *ainigmata*, such as the ship of state (e.g. Theognis 667–82).
[135] Granger (2007) 430.

of injustice that athletic prowess is valued over wisdom. Third, they invite certain types of interpretation. Whilst both sets of fragments present distinctive ways of seeing the world, the elegies provoke imaginative participation in the community described, whereas the hexameters invite pensive reflection on the relationship between the statements made and the real state of affairs. Unlike elegies, hexameters, partly due to the purportedly divine origins of their content, were treated as a genre that required a symbolic interpretation through which an audience could confront the divine truths underlying the literal text. Xenophanes capitalises on this tendency by inviting us to reflect on the true reference of the verb γίγνομαι and its cognates as well as on the ways in which a perfect god is or is not like the anthropomorphic Zeus. This understanding of the function of Xenophanes' poetry counts against the view that he was 'starkly literal-minded' or that for poets of this period, 'the only validation of their poetry is that it tells the truth, conforming veridically to a real past or present state of affairs,' unless 'conforming to' is taken in so broad a sense as to encompass symbolic signification.[136]

As I shall argue in the subsequent chapters, the capacity of hexameters to prompt questions concerning the relationship between the text, its traditionally divine source of authority and its potentially symbolic referents provides an explanation for why the genre was adopted by Parmenides and Empedocles, over against prose or elegies that had been used by other claimants to wisdom. But their choice must also have been influenced more specifically by the example of Xenophanes, who expanded the resources of the genre by using it to present physical explanations of divine and natural affairs that were radically different from those he could have expected of his audience, thereby inaugurating a tradition that would go on to include some of the most influential poems of antiquity.

[136] Most (1999) 343, commenting on Homer and Hesiod, but he sees this as a feature that they bequeathed to the early Greek philosophers.

CHAPTER 2

Parmenides

1 Introduction

While Xenophanes can be partly assimilated to the familiar category of 'didactic elegists', Parmenides' use of verse has seemed more anomalous. His single hexameter poem, depicting a fantastical journey in the first person through the gate of the paths of Night and Day, where an anonymous goddess reveals the true nature of reality, is quite unlike any other substantially surviving work of early Greek literature. Commentators have often been perplexed by Parmenides' choice of verse on the assumption that his poetry is obscure and of low literary merit, betraying a wish that the reputed forefather of logic had written in lucid prose.[1] As we shall see, to some degree, Parmenides' use of verse, like that of Xenophanes, is indeed paradoxical: he presents overt claims that are inimical to poetry as traditionally practised. But of course, any complaint that he did not write in a manner characteristic of later philosophical prose imports anachronistic expectations. A more charitable procedure is to treat the difficulties of Parmenides' poetry as functional, that is, as designed to elicit certain responses from the audience.[2] The literary context in which Parmenides operated, as well as the overt doctrinal claims presented in his poem, provide evidence for such functions.

[1] This wish is most clear in Guthrie (1965) 12, ('the main content . . . would have been much better conveyed in the plain prose of an Anaximenes or an Anaxagoras') and Barnes (1982) 155. For negative comments on Parmenides' literary merits, see also Diels (1897) 7; Kranz (1916) 1163; Hussey (1972) 79; Barnes (1982) 155; KRS 241; Kennedy (1989) 81.

[2] Mackenzie (1982); Floyd (1992); Wöhrle (1993); Morgan (2000) 67–87; Barrett (2004); Robbiano (2006); Mourelatos (2008a) 1–46; and Bryan (2012) 58–113 all adopt approaches along these lines. I differ from them here in my emphasis on the immersive, aesthetic and emotional qualities of early hexameter.

This approach differs from that of the most influential study of Parmenides' literary form, Alexander Mourelatos' *The Route of Parmenides*,[3] which argued that the traditional structures of 'questing' and 'journeying' provided a basis for Parmenides' concept of knowing: 'straying off-course' amounts to intellectual error and the traditional 'fate-constraint' of the epic hero becomes the newly discovered concept of logical necessity. In suggesting that Parmenides used metaphors, not to encode preconceived ideas, but to think through new concepts, Mourelatos' 1970 study was remarkably ahead of his time, anticipating, in some degree, later discussions of conceptual metaphor.[4] Nevertheless, my focus differs from that of Mourelatos, primarily in two respects. First, his analysis relies heavily on a comparison with the language and imagery of journeying in *Odyssey*, but an expanded range of *comparanda*, both from within the *Odyssey* and elsewhere, can help to identify the sort of journey this is with greater precision.[5] Second, and more fundamentally, Mourelatos' explanation focuses largely on the way in which traditional patterns influenced Parmenides' thought, saying relatively little about how such patterns might affect an audience. Rather than seeing Parmenides as simply constrained by tradition, we can instead regard him as manipulating traditional features to provide certain experiences and to provoke certain responses.

In this regard, it is worth mentioning a further, if somewhat eccentric, trend in modern scholarship on the poem. The experience of Parmenides' audience has been most extensively discussed by those who regard it as an esoteric text. On this view, the poem 'described a mystical experience and above all aims through the power of language to induce this same experience in its listeners'.[6] There are, however, a number of objections to the

[3] Mourelatos (2008a).

[4] I am of course thinking of Lakoff and Johnson (1980). For a useful introduction to this topic, summarising earlier work, see Kövecses (2010). For literary-critical studies of metaphor as a means to think through new concepts, see Lyne (2011) and Cave (2016) 83–105. Mourelatos himself drew on Max Black's influential work on metaphor.

[5] Mourelatos (2008a) 41–4 does discuss 'traditions other than epic', but this section is mostly devoted to the thorny issue of Parmenides' relationship to shamanism and plays little role in his wider argument. Meuli (1935) and Dodds (1951) 135–78 influentially argued that this phenomenon was practised in Archaic Greece, but their theory is convincingly refuted by Bremmer (1983) 14–52 and (2001) 27–40.

[6] Gemelli Marciano (2008) 26, in summary of the views of Kingsley (1999) and (2003). Her interpretation is presented more expansively in Gemelli Marciano (2013). West (1971) 222–3 and Ustinova (2009) 191–209 similarly regard the poem as deriving from a religious experience, rather than rational deduction. Tarán (1965) 26–30 discusses (and dismisses) earlier interpretations along these lines.

'esoteric' reading. The early reception history counts against such a possibility: if the poem were really composed only for a select, esoteric, group of followers, it seems unlikely that it would have swiftly achieved such a widespread reputation across the Greek world as to be excerpted by the fifth-century Sophist Hippias of Elis in his *Sunagoge* and then have survived in the manuscript tradition to be quoted first-hand by Simplicius in the sixth century CE.[7] For what it is worth, Plato presents Parmenides as an attendant at the Great Panathenaea, whose poem is already familiar to the young Socrates (*Parm.* 127a7–b6, 128a–e).[8] A more plausible means of publication, then, would be rhapsodic performance at public festivals, as is attested for Xenophanes' performance of his poetry and for Empedocles' *Katharmoi*, and as was common for hexameter poems longer than epigrams or verse oracles.[9] It was not only a self-defined, select group that would have heard Parmenides' poem, but a wider, festival-going public. Given this context, Parmenides seems prima facie more likely to have envisioned the sort of imaginative and emotional response to his poem that is evinced for rhapsodic performances than the mystical hallucinations of the esoteric reading.

A closer analysis of Parmenides' narratives and imagery will support this suggestion. But before going into this in detail, I want to explore some of the implications of the goddess's claims for poetry, for her arguments provide some clues as to the purposes of Parmenides' use of epic verse. In this sense, we can understand the function of Parmenides' poetry in light of his philosophy.

2 Poetry and Parmenides' Philosophy

The poem is divided structurally into three sections. The proem (D4=B1) describes the youth's chariot journey to a location beyond 'the gate of the

[7] On Hippias' *Sunagoge*, see Introduction Section 1 above. Simplicius quoted extensive passages of Parmenides precisely because he had access to a rare copy of the poem (*In Phys.* 144.25–28=R73=A21).

[8] Plato's *Parmenides*, however, should be treated as a historical source with extreme caution, not least since its primary narrator is far removed from the events reported: the dialogue is narrated by Cephalus, who has heard the story of the conversation from a reluctant Antiphon, who himself has heard it from Pythodorus, who had been present on the occasion.

[9] Similarly, Patzer (2006) 85. On the rhapsodic performance of Xenophanes and Empedocles, see, respectively, Chapter 1 Section 2 above and Chapter 3 Section 2 below. Schwabl (1963) argued, on the basis of certain structural features, that Parmenides' poem was rhapsodically performed. On the character of Greek public festivals, featuring contests of wisdom as well as athletic and poetic competitions, see Richardson (1992) 225.

paths of Night and Day' (D4=B1.11), where the goddess greets him and speaks, as far as we can tell, for the rest of the poem.[10] She announces that she will reveal 'both the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth / and the opinions of mortals in which there is no true trustworthiness' (D4=B1.29–30), descriptions that correspond respectively to the second and third sections of the poem, the so-called *Aletheia* (D6>B2–B8.48) and the *Doxa* (D8.54=B8.49–D62=B19). The goddess distinguishes two 'paths of enquiry' (ὁδοί . . . διζήσιός, D6>B2.2), one 'that it is and that it is not possible that it is not' (ὅπως ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς οὐκ ἔστι μὴ εἶναι, D6>B2.3); the other, 'that it is not and that it is necessary that it is not' (ἡ δ' ὡς οὐκ ἔστιν τε καὶ ὡς χρεών ἐστι μὴ εἶναι, D6>B2.5). The latter 'path of enquiry' turns out to be a dead end, for 'you could not recognise or point out what is not (for it is impossible)' (οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἐὸν [οὐ γὰρ ἀνυστόν] / οὔτε φράσαις, D6>B2.7–8). Most mortals, however, falsely suppose that they do recognise such a thing as 'what is not', and they mix it up with 'what is' (D7=B6). In the most extended fragment (D8>B8), the goddess argues for certain properties of 'what is': that it is uncreated, indestructible, singular, unmoving and undifferentiated. However, for what appears to be the final and longest section of the poem,[11] she recounts the *Doxa*, an elaborate cosmology in which all things are formed out of the two elements 'Night' and 'Light'. This section in some sense reflects the 'opinions' of mortals (D8.55=B8.50) and constitutes a 'deceptive arrangement of words' (D8.56=B8.51).

The interpretation even of the goddess's most basic propositional claims is a matter of great scholarly controversy.[12] It is agonisingly unclear what she means by '(it) is' and in what respects the *Doxa* is 'deceptive'. Since my aim is not to offer new solutions to these problems, I shall outline somewhat dogmatically the interpretation here adopted, though it would not be accepted by all specialists. The items in the *Doxa* violate the conditions for 'what-is' outlined in the *Aletheia*: they move and mingle with one another (e.g. D14=B12). But this does not entail that they do not in some sense *exist*, that the *Doxa* is purely there as some kind of thought experiment, or as an exemplar of previous, mistaken cosmologies. Rather,

[10] Simplicius' introduction to D62=B19 (where the goddess is still talking) implies that it is the end of the *Doxa*, the third section of the poem. There does not appear to have been a fourth section, although this is an argument *ex silentio*.

[11] Palmer (2009) 160 estimates that this occupied 80 per cent of the original poem, on the basis of the testimonies of Plut. *Col.* 1114B–C and Simplicius *in Cael.* 559.26–7, who stress the exhaustiveness of the *Doxa*'s detail.

[12] For a recent summary of different views on the matter, see Kraus (2013).

the *Doxa* describes 'Doxastic things', objects over which we can have opinion, but which do not live up to the standards of *Aletheia*, a term better translated as 'true reality' than 'truth'.[13] The *Doxa* describes accurately the world of mortal opinion, which is inherently deceptive, whilst the *Aletheia* reveals to us the unchanging object of divine knowledge.[14]

These arguments have some troubling implications for poetry, at least as it was traditionally practised. We saw in Chapter 1 that Xenophanes' singular god could not be an agent in a narrative that was anything like the traditional narratives surrounding Greek deities. With Parmenides, the same issue arises to an even greater degree: the entity outlined in the *Aletheia* could not be an agent in any narrative whatsoever. According to Lowe's definition, the medium of a narrative text needs to be able to represent events, and it must be linear, in the sense that it must be received in a particular order, just as literary texts offer a string of words designed to be read in one order rather than another.[15] What-is is unchanging and singular, and so can hardly be involved in 'events'. Even the second of Lowe's criteria, linearity, is frustrated by the goddess's statement that 'it is indifferent to me, from whence I begin, for I shall return there again later' (D5=B5).[16] Parmenides' use of narrative, and in particular the dynamic narrative of the journey, is rendered paradoxical by the nature of being as outlined in the goddess's speech. The story of the journey is inherently one of movement and change, both features that are denied of what-is (D8.43=B8.38).

More problematic still, language as a whole seemingly fails to give an accurate representation of reality. Mortal error consists in establishing misleading names for what-is (σήματ' ἔθεντο, D8.60=B8.55; πάντα φάος καὶ νὺξ ὀνόμασται, D13=B9.1; and emphatically, in the closing line, τοῖς δ' ὄνομ' ἄνθρωποι κατέθεντ' ἐπίσημον ἑκάστωι, D62=B19.3). The plurality of mortal *onomata* thus erroneously divides what truly is into multiple entities.[17] The only 'true' thing one can say that is not misleading in this way appears to be

[13] See especially Cole (1983) and Palmer (2009) 89–93: *aletheia* for Parmenides is not a logical property; rather, it is an ontological and epistemological one.

[14] Most recent commentators, stressing the length and detail of the *Doxa*, have tended to regard it as intended as an accurate account of doxastic things, but not of true reality. See e.g. Nehamas (2002) 56–63; Palmer (2009) 163; Bredlow (2011); Johansen (2016); Tor (2015) and (2017) 155–308 (esp. 163–221). As Tor points out, the notion that the *Doxa* is intended as an accurate account of the doxastic world need not rule out the possibility that it also reveals how such a world fails to live up to true reality. For a detailed summary of earlier scholarly views, see Kraus (2013) 481–96.

[15] Lowe (2000) 20.

[16] ξυνὸν δέ μοί ἐστιν / ὁππόθεν ἄρξωμαι · τόθι γὰρ πάλιν ἵξομαι αὖτις. See Coxon (2009) 286–7, following Diels (1897), for the translation of ξυνόν as 'indifferent'.

[17] Thus Graeser (1977) 362; Kraus (1987) 94–7; and Mason (1988) 149–51. Note the principle of language 'dividing' its objects at Pl. *Crat.* 338b.

ἐστί. The term is repeated in an almost incantatory manner by the goddess.[18] The notion that mortal language differs from divine communication is already implicit in earlier Greek hexameter, where certain terms are only ever used of divine speech and the gods have special words for particular items.[19] Xenophanes developed this distinction between divine and mortal communication by having the single greatest god communicate without speech. Parmenides continues this trend by portraying mortal language as deficient. All the same, the goddess must use mortal terminology, inadequate though it may be, since she is communicating with a mortal addressee. As I argued was the case for Xenophanes, the consequences of this deficiency for poetry are double-edged: on the one hand, the fictional potential of poetry illustrates the deceptive nature of mortal language and experience; on the other, poetry acts as a means of saying the unsayable, of thinking through new concepts and transporting the audience, beyond the limitations of ordinary speech, to a contemplation of unchanging reality.

3 Poetry and Deception

a Deception and the Doxa

The first of these functions is most evident in the transition to the *Doxa*, where Parmenides inscribes the self-consciously 'deceptive' part of the poem within a tradition that stresses the tendency of poetry to tell made-up stories (D8.55–66=B8.50–61):

ἐν τῶι σοι παύω πιστὸν λόγον ἠδὲ νόημα
ἀμφὶς ἀληθείης· δόξας δ' ἀπὸ τοῦδε βροτείας
μάνθανε κόσμον ἐμῶν ἐπέων ἀπατηλὸν ἀκούων.
μορφὰς γὰρ κατέθεντο δύο γνώμας ὀνομάζειν·
τῶν μίαν οὐ χρεών ἐστιν – ἐν ὧι πεπλανημένοι εἰσίν –
τἀντία δ' ἐκρίναντο δέμας καὶ σήματ' ἔθεντο
χωρὶς ἀπ' ἀλλήλων, τῆι μὲν φλογὸς αἰθέριον πῦρ,
ἤπιον ὄν, μέγ' ἐλαφρόν, ἑωυτῶι πάντοσε τωὐτόν,
τῶι δ' ἑτέρωι μὴ τωὐτόν· ἀτὰρ κἀκεῖνο κατ' αὐτό
τἀντία νύκτ' ἀδαῆ, πυκινὸν δέμας ἐμβριθές τε.

[18] For the incantatory repetition in Parmenides, note Kingsley (1999) 118–21 and Gemelli Marciano (2008) 32–4; on repetition as typical of incantation in ancient magical spells, see Versnel (2002) 130–5.

[19] In Homer, terms such as ὄσσα, θέσπις and θεσπέσιος are only used of divine speech (see Ford [1992] 180–97), implying that it has a different status from mortal speech, and certain objects are given different names by humans and the gods (*Il.* 1.403, 2.813–14, 14.291, 20.74; at *Od.* 10.305 and 12.62, divine names, but no human names are given). See Gera (2003) 47–57.

τόν σοι ἐγὼ διάκοσμον ἐοικότα πάντα φατίζω,
ὡς οὐ μή ποτέ τίς σε βροτῶν γνώμη παρελάσσηι.

At this point for you I end the trustworthy speech and thought
About truth; but, from here, the mortal opinions
Learn by hearing the deceptive arrangement of my words.
For they established shapes to name their two judgements;[20]
Of which they should not name one – on that point they have erred –
And they have judged body in opposite ways and placed signs
Apart from one another, to one of them the ethereal fire of flame,
Being gentle, very light, in every way the same as itself,
But not the same as the other; but that one, by itself,
The opposite, unknowing night, a thick body and weighty.
I tell you, this whole, likely arrangement,
So that no judgement of mortals shall ever surpass you.

A number of details advertise the status of this section as a poetic construction. First, the goddess introduces the *Doxa* as a '*kosmos* of words' (κόσμον ἐπέων) a punning reference both to the arrangement of the words and to the cosmos it depicts. More importantly for our present purposes, the expression has specifically poetological connotations.[21] Solon proclaims that he has put together a 'Song, a *kosmos* of words, instead of a speech' (fr. 1.2 W, κόσμον ἐπέων †ὠιδὴν ἀντ' ἀγορῆς θέμενος). As Noussia-Fantuzzi notes, this expression 'designates an ordered and metrically defined sequence of ἔπεα'.[22] A further relevant example is Democritus' statement that 'Homer, who received as his share a nature that was divine, has constructed a *kosmos* of all kinds of words' (Ὅμηρος φύσεως λαχὼν θεαζούσης ἐπέων κόσμον ἐτεκτήνατο παντοίων, D221=B21). Given that Democritus' atomism seems in large part to have been formulated as a defence of pluralism against Eleatic monism, this fragment could well be a direct allusion to Parmenides' line, putting a positive spin on something which had been negatively characterised in

[20] For this interpretation of this line, see Mackenzie (2017) 46–7.

[21] In favour of identifying the pun, see e.g. Kraus (1987) 80–1; Nehamas (2002) 60. On the aesthetic and specifically poetological connotations of *kosmos*, see Nünlist (1998) 90–7, who exhaustively cites parallels, including most closely, *Od.* 8.489, 8.492; *hHom.* 7.58–9; Simonides *eleg.* 11.23 W, 22.5–6 W; *OF* 25; Pind. fr. 194.2–3. Lanata (1963) 12–13 and Walsh (1984) 8–9 discuss poetic *kosmos* in the *Odyssey* but argue that it indicates the truthfulness of Demodocus' account when it seems more vaguely to indicate that it is 'appropriate' and 'well-ordered'. For more a detailed, nuanced reading of the Homeric passage, see Halliwell (2011) 84–8.

[22] Noussia-Fantuzzi (2010) 211. Note also the roughly contemporary parallel of Simonides fr. 11.23 W κ [όσμον ἀοι]δῆς, and the later instance of Philetas fr. 10.3 Powell=8.3 Lightfoot, where the narrator 'knows the arrangement of words' (ἐπέων εἰδὼς κόσμον), in lines which 'contain an image, perhaps self-image, of the refined, learned, and dedicated poet' (Lightfoot [2009] 43). On this parallel, see also Floyd (1992) 261–3.

the earlier poem.[23] The parallels suggest, then, that '*kosmos* of words' marks out the *Doxa* as an arrangement of verse.

Second, the fact that the account is 'deceptive' (ἀπατηλόν) also recalls early Greek discussions of poetry. A proverb, apparently mentioned by Solon, stated that 'poets tell many lies' (πολλὰ ψεύδονται ἀοιδοί, Solon fr. 29 W). Famously, Gorgias would define tragedy as a 'deception in which the one who has deceived is more just than the one who has not deceived and the one who has been deceived is wiser than the one who has not been deceived' (D35=B23).[24] An association between poets and lying or deceiving is already implicit in Hesiod's *Theogony*, in the *Odyssey*'s combination of singer and deceiver in its depictions of Odysseus, Helen and the Sirens, and in the figure of Hermes in the Homeric Hymn.[25] This context, coupled with the connotations of the expression, '*kosmos* of words', invites us to regard the *Doxa* as deceptive in a manner analogous to the incredible tales of the poets.

Third, the goddess's description of the *Doxa* as διάκοσμον ἐοικότα, 'a likely arrangement' (D8.65=B8.60), has been seen as a 'window-allusion' to the 'lies like (ὁμοῖα) true things' of Hesiod's Muses (*Theog.* 27) via Xenophanes D50=B35, 'Let these things be thought to be like true things' (ἐοικότα τοῖς ἐτύμοισι).[26] Such an allusion is supported by the fact that, in the proem, the goddess's distinction between the *Aletheia* and the *Doxa* corresponds to the distinction made by Hesiod's Muses between truthful and verisimilitudinous speech. Discussions of this relationship have focused on its consequences for our understanding of Parmenides' epistemology,[27] but most notable for our purposes is the fact that the allusion implicates the poem within discussions over the veridical status of poetry in particular: the *Doxa* is not merely 'likely' but likely in a manner that is comparable to potentially deceptive, Muse-inspired song. Xenophanes had adapted the line, apparently, to mark the speculative nature of his own cosmological claims, in opposition to the truth claims of earlier poets (see Chapter 1 Section 2a above). Within the context of Parmenides' poem, the unstable nature of the *Doxa*'s cosmology contrasts with the more secure knowledge attainable of what-is. But, like the Muses' lies, the cosmology will appear convincing to mortals. The resonance of the

[23] On the atomists' response to Parmenides, see Sedley (1982) and (2008).

[24] ἀπάτην ἣν ὅ τ' ἀπατήσας δικαιότερος τοῦ μὴ ἀπατήσαντος καὶ ὁ ἀπατηθεὶς σοφώτερος τοῦ μὴ ἀπατηθέντος. A similar claim is also made (perhaps under the influence of Gorgias) at *Dissoi Logoi* 3.10.

[25] On this topic, see esp. Pratt (1993) and Introduction Section 2 above.

[26] Thus, most extensively, Bryan (2012) 58–113 (esp. 64–6, 93–100).

[27] Coxon (2009) 349–51; Bryan (2012) 58–113.

Hesiodic scene thus marks the status of the *Doxa* as fulfilling the capacity of poetry to be versimilitudinous.

b The Sirens

This section, then, like the most effective earlier hexameter poetry, is so comprehensive (D4=B1.31–2) and plausible (a quality implied by ἐοικότα) that we are tempted to immerse ourselves uncritically within the imaginative world it describes, but the goddess protects us from this temptation by marking it out as a world of poetic deception. A further feature serves to illustrate this state of affairs, a reference to the paradigmatically alluring singers of Greek myth, the Sirens. Scholars have observed that Parmenides' reference to necessity holding 'what-is' 'in the bonds of a limit' (πείρατος ἐν δεσμοῖσιν ἔχει, D8.36=B8.31) is modelled on Odysseus' description of being tied to the mast at *Od.* 12.196, πλείοσί μ' ἐν δεσμοῖσι δέον, 'they bound me with more bonds'.[28] The expression ἐν δεσμοῖσιν occurs in the same metrical position in both lines. Whilst this parallel alone may not seem particularly compelling, we can add a further one, briefly mentioned by Havelock.[29] The goddess teaches the youth this deceptive account so that no 'judgement of mortals shall surpass' him (D8.66=B8.61). The verb that Parmenides uses (παρελάσσηι) occurs several times in reference to the journey of Odysseus' ship past the Sirens (παρὲξ ἐλάαν, *Od.* 12.47, 55; παρελαύνειν, 186, 197). Closest to the Parmenidean line is *Od.* 12.186, sung by the Sirens themselves, 'For no one has yet gone past in his black ship' (οὐ γάρ πώ τις τῇδε παρήλασε νηΐ μελαίνῃ). Both Parmenides D8.66=B8.61 and *Od.* 12.186 have 'no-one' (οὐ τίς) as the subject of 'surpass' (παρελαύνειν), qualified by a temporal adverb (πώ/ποτέ). The verbal echoes are bolstered by similarities of circumstance: both lines are spoken by a female deity to a mortal addressee, and in both cases divine knowledge is emphasised. Further, both speakers are telling a deceptive tale: we know that the Sirens' listeners will not in fact 'return' (νεῖται) and that they are saying this in an attempt to lure Odysseus as their next victim. Parmenides' goddess is also about to tell us a deceptive story (D8.57=B8.52).

The background of the Sirens episode illuminates Parmenides' use of chain imagery as well as the deceptive nature of the *Doxa*. The goddess has described 'what-is' as being held 'in chains' whilst most mortals, in their beliefs, erroneously split it into separate things. Odysseus, on hearing this

[28] Cassin (1987); Wright (1998) 18. [29] Havelock (1958) 143 n. 59.

song, begs for his bonds to be loosened (*Od.* 12.193), at which point his companions, Perimedes and Eurylochus, heap on further chains (195–6). With this context in mind, the 'Way of Opinion' appears as an alluring account, like the Sirens' song, which tempts us to strive, like Odysseus, to loosen the 'bonds' of what really is. In the *Odyssey*, the Sirens mix the truth with lies. They claim to know all that happened at Troy – indeed, all that happens on earth (*Od.* 12.189–91) – and they demonstrate their supernatural knowledge when addressing Odysseus by name (*Od.* 12.184) before he has provided any clue as to his identity.[30] But the Sirens also fallaciously claim that their listeners leave safely after hearing their song (*Od.* 12.188). The *Doxa* similarly contains a mixture of qualities that do and do not apply to true reality, at least as it is set out in the *Aletheia*. Fire is 'in every way the same as itself' (ἑωυτῶι πάντοσε τωὐτόν, D8.62=B8.57) and Night is 'by itself' (κατ' αὐτό, D8.63=B8.58), features that resemble the entity described in D8>B8, which is also 'by itself' (καθ' ἑαυτό, D8.34=B8.29) and 'equal to itself in every direction' (πάντοθεν ἶσον, D8.54=B8.49). At D13=B9.3, 'all is full together of light and invisible night' (πᾶν πλέον ἐστὶν ὁμοῦ φάεος καὶ νυκτὸς ἀφάντου), whilst in the *Aletheia*, 'everything is full of what-is' (πᾶν δ' ἔμπλεόν ἐστιν ἐόντος, D8.29=B8.24). The objects in the *Doxa*, like true reality, are 'bound' within 'limits' (D12=B10.6–7). These qualities, in the *Aletheia*, are 'markers', *semata*, of what-is (D8.7=B8.2). By following some, but not all of them, we might be led astray into the 'likely' story of the *Doxa*. In other respects, the objects of the *Doxa* clearly contrast with the features of true being set out in the *Aletheia* since, in the *Doxa*, things are generated (D12=B10.6) and move (D12=B10.4, D27=B14).[31] The mythological reference points to the fact that the *Doxa*, like the Sirens' song, seductively combines elements that are deceptive and those that are *alēthēs* – accurate and in conformity to true reality.

In this respect, both the *Doxa* and the Sirens' episode also resemble the Hesiodic 'lies like the truth'. The three passages can be read in dialogue, as contributions to a discussion surrounding the deceptive potential of song. The Sirens and Hesiod's Muses, using similar expressions, claim to 'know' two sets of things and both are able to speak both deceptions and truths,[32] but the nature of the deception differs in each case. Hesiod's Muses know

[30] A particularly striking detail, given the significance of naming, and especially Odysseus' name, within the poem. See especially Austin (1972).

[31] On the respects in which the cosmology of the *Doxa* is 'like' or resembles the entity of the *Aletheia*, see Johansen (2016).

[32] Note the anaphora 'ἴδμεν . . . ἴδμεν', occurring at both *Od.* 12.189, and Hes. *Theog.* 27–8. On the theory of poetics underlying the Sirens passage, see Ledbetter (2003) 27–34.

how to speak lies that are equivalent to the truth, so that, from a mortal perspective, the effect of their song is the same whether or not they choose to tell truths.[33] Their falsehoods have the property of verisimilitude: they seem plausible even though, for all we know, all their details may be invented. The Sirens, by contrast combine their lies with details that their listener knows to be factually accurate, such as Odysseus' name and the fact that he toiled at Troy.[34] The *Doxa* presents a further variation on this theme. This section offers a cosmology that is 'deceptive' and in which there is no 'true trustworthiness', but it is not necessarily false and in the surviving fragments is nowhere labelled as *pseudea*. The word translated as 'true', *alēthēs*, encompasses factual accuracy, but, in its earliest usages, seems to refer specifically to speech that neither omits significant details nor adds extraneous information to its listener.[35] In other words, a speech, such as the *Doxa*, may be factually accurate, and refer to actual states of affairs, whilst still failing to meet the conditions for *aletheia*. Rather, like Xenophanes' cosmology, it seems to refer to items over which true certainty is impossible.

The fact that, in the introduction to the *Doxa*, Parmenides alludes both to the Sirens' episode and to the lying Muses of Hesiod's *Theogony* encourages us to explore this comparison further. A mortal audience of the *Doxa*, who had not heard the *Aletheia*, would be in the same position as the addressees of Hesiod's Muses: they are unable to tell whether it is true or not, and it has the appearance of that over which there is certainty. Having learned the *Aletheia*, however, we are ideally in a position to identify the ways in which it does or does not conform to the characteristics of that over which we can have certainty, just as an audience of the *Odyssey* is able to tell the true from the false parts of the Sirens' speech. We might recall that the Sirens caused forgetfulness of homecoming (cf. *Od.* 12.41–6) because of their song that appeared to be truthful; our knowledge of *aletheia* – literally, 'un-forgetfulness' – will prevent us from being seduced by the *Doxa* into thinking it is entirely *alēthēs*. Whether or not we would expect an audience to have picked up on all these details in performance, the *Doxa* draws upon well-known earlier episodes that had stressed some of the troubling implications of poetry's capacity to lure us into a vividly

[33] Thus, Heiden (2007). For a thorough, recent discussion of these much-discussed lines see Tor (2017) 61–103, who emphasises their problematic nature.

[34] On this distinction, with respect to Odysseus' 'lies like the true things' (*Od.* 19.203), cf. Williams (2002) 204–5, who points out that the expression refers to *vraisemblance* rather than resemblance to things that actually occurred.

[35] Cole (1983).

imagined world. Through alluding to these highly meta-literary episodes and through marking this section out as a poetic construction, Parmenides warns us that we should treat it with the epistemological caution appropriate to the fanciful tales of the poets.

c Deception and the Proem

In light of the goddess's rejection of sensory experience and her presentation of the *Doxa* as a world of poetic artifice, the extraordinary journey of the proem appears as a deception in two senses. First, it is deceptive because it is an instance of vivid literary mimesis. We imagine a chariot journey without actually observing one. Though the precise topography of the proem may be 'blurred beyond recognition',[36] it presents an especially immersive description. There is a selective reference to particular details in an order that seems to follow the path of the youth's gaze: we can imagine him looking in amazement at the horses straining at the chariot (D4=B1.1, 5), then at the maidens leading them (D4=B1.5), then turning towards the source of the sound and looking at the wheels on either side (D4=B1.6–7), then finally, again, turning to the maidens as they remove their veils (D4=B1.10). The proem's 'blurredness' and the uncertainty of some of its syntax further contribute to this focalisation,[37] generating a sense of bewilderment that reflects the youth's experience on this strange trip. These features facilitate an audience's assumption of the youth's perspective and their immersion into the world of the narrative.[38]

The fact that the journey is a fantastical one that stretches our credulity underscores the deceptiveness of the mimetic world it conjures. As Burkert's classic study showed, the area described in the proem resembles Hesiod's Tartarus, and the youth's claim to have gone to this place conforms to a pattern recognisable in the stories of Archaic sages, such as Aristeas, Epimenides, Salmoxis and Pythagoras, who were said to have gone on extraordinary journeys and, in many cases, to have died and come

[36] Mourelatos (2008a) 15.

[37] The phrase εἰς φάος (line 10) may be been taken to refer to the direction of πέμπειν, that is, the ultimate destination of where the Heliades are taking the youth (thus, e.g. in DK, and more recently espoused by Kahn [2002] and [2005]) or to the direction of the participle προλιποῦσαι, that is, to the place at which they arrive to collect the youth (thus, Morrison [1955] 60; Burkert [1969] 7–9; Palmer [2009] 57; Cosgrove [2011] 37–8; Primavesi [2013a] 53–6). However, as Miller (2006) 20 argues, we may read here a functional ambiguity.

[38] For selectivity of details (as opposed to exhaustive, panoramic description) and embedded focalisation as especially immersive features that facilitate an audience's visualisation of the narrative, see, respectively, Grethlein and Huitink (2017) and Allan, de Jong and de Jonge (2017) 42–3.

back to life.[39] But it should be noted that these stories were met with considerable scepticism in the fifth century BCE.[40] Sophocles' Orestes cynically states that he has 'often seen wise men dying in false report. Then, when they come home again, they are honoured more' (*El.* 62–4).[41] Herodotus reports a rationalising account of Salmoxis in which he hoodwinks the Thracians into believing he has died by living in an underground chamber for three years (4.95). Democritus even wrote a treatise on such stories, presumably providing rational explanations (D143<B1). Scepticism of this kind over the proem is triggered by certain details. The goddess, on greeting the youth, distinguishes 'the unshaken heart of well-rounded truth' from 'the opinions of mortals in which there is no true trustworthiness', a detail which may lead us to question whether what we have just heard corresponds to the truth or to untrustworthy opinion. Her word for 'trustworthiness', πίστις, etymologically related to the verb for persuasion, πείθω, recalls the Heliades' careful persuasion of Justice (D4=B1.15–16) to open the gates. The fact that they must persuade Justice 'with gentle words' (μαλακοῖσι λόγοισιν, D4=B1.15) invites speculation over whether their persuasion is truthful or deceptive, especially since 'much-punishing Justice' might impose a severe penalty on the latter. The expression may have deceptive connotations: its only Homeric occurrence is in reference to the crooked words by which Calypso causes Odysseus to forget Ithaka (*Od.* 1.56). This thematisation of the trustworthiness and deceptiveness of speech raises the issue of the trustworthiness of the youth's account, which has been so vivid, yet has depicted an event which is so far from the realm of everyday experience.

The second sense in which the proem is deceptive is more fundamental, for the world it describes conspicuously fails to meet the goddess's conditions for true being.[42] The salient images of movement, duality (in the wheels 'on both sides') and opposition (in the image of Night and Day) are pointedly incompatible with the true reality of the *Aletheia*. The image of the paths of Night and Day – the two elemental components of the cosmology – confirms that the proem, at least up until the youth crosses

[39] Burkert (1969); cf. (1972) 283–5. The main details that recall Hesiod's Tartarus are the place of Night (D4=B1.9; cf. *Theog.* 744), the gates which straddle the paths of Night and Day (D4=B1.11; cf. *Theog.* 732–3, 748–50), and the chasm created when the gates open (D4=B1.18; cf. *Theog.* 740).

[40] Possibly, there is already scepticism of this sort evident in the *Odyssey* if we are to detect an ironic tone in Alcinous' comment that Odysseus does not look like a liar and that he spoke expertly, like a singer (*Od.* 11.363–9), just as he is in the midst of recounting the *Nekuia*, the scene that most of all stretches our credulity. On this sort of irony in the epic, see Goldhill (1991) 36–56 and Segal (1983).

[41] For the connection between this passage and the sages mentioned, see Finglass (2007) *ad loc.*

[42] On this aspect of the proem, see Miller (2006) 12–39. Note also Coxon (2009) 276–7 *ad* D4=B1.12.

the gate, describes the deceptive world of the *Doxa*. According to this second sense, all of our sensory experiences are deceptive. But the poetological language that introduces the *Doxa* suggests that the first type of deception is intended to illustrate the second: the familiar example of poetic deception allows us to see that the whole world of our sensory experience is deceptive, albeit in a different respect. Poetry deceives us by generating an imagined world that need not correspond to any actual state of affairs; our senses deceive us by presenting a shifting world that does not live up to the demands of secure knowledge. In both cases, we should refrain from granting the status of certain reality.

4 Profound Visions and Sublime Emotions

a Seeing the Unseeable

Whilst Parmenides' poetic mimesis illustrates sensory deception, it also serves the more positive didactic function of leading us to contemplate an entity that could not be encapsulated in ordinary speech. We noted in the Introduction that, already in our earliest sources, poetry characteristically enables its audience to imagine a world separate from the *hic et nunc* and that this process is often presented in visual terms. As a later ancient critic would imply, when discussing Homer's *enargeia*, poetry can turn its listeners into spectators.[43] Parmenides harnesses this particular characteristic, inviting a visual response to his text, quite explicitly, when the goddess commands the youth (and, by extension, the audience) to 'see things which though absent are present to the mind' (D10=B4.1).[44] Other details entrench the impression that the goddess's speech affords a visual experience. Those that do not recognise what-is and who have not been granted this divine perspective are 'blind' (D7=B6.7) for trusting their senses. The surprisingly intimate gesture, from a deity, of the handclasp (D4=B1.22) is a sign of good faith but may also indicate that she is leading the youth by the hand to show him the correct path.[45] We might compare *Il.* 4.539–44,

[43] ΣbT *Il.* 23.363–72, on which, see Grethlein and Huitink (2017) 67–9, as well as Meijering (1987) 29–52 and Nünlist (2009) 194–8. On the history of the term *enargeia*, see Zanker (1981).

[44] LM assign this fragment to the *Doxa*, but I follow most editors in treating it as part of the *Aletheia*, given that it seems to articulate a principle elaborated at greater length in D8>B8.

[45] On the handclasp and its significance, note Floyd (1992) 254–5; Coxon (2009) 10; and especially Mansfeld (2005) 554–5, who draws on the parallels such as *Il.* 6.223, 14.232 and *Od.* 1.120–3, 2.302 to argue that it is a mark of good faith. Floyd on the other hand argues that the two closest parallels to Parmenides' line (*Il.* 21.286; *Od.* 2.321) involve some degree of deception, but his interpretation of the Iliadic example is questionable.

where Athene protectively leads by the hand (χειρὸς ἑλοῦσ', 542) a hypothetical warrior across the battlefield, or a later statement, by Dionysius of Halicarnassus (*Ant. Rom.* 11.1.3), that 'the mind of every man takes pleasure in being led by the hand (χειραγωγουμένη) through words to deeds, and not only hearing the things said but seeing what is done'.[46] Our experience of 'seeing' what the goddess describes is, then, a *mise en abyme*, a visualisation within the wider visualisation of the story as a whole, that had begun with the proem. Whilst, in the proem, we were invited to imagine something that was, in practice, inaccessible to mortal experience, in the *Aletheia*, we are told to visualise an entity that is not only practically but theoretically inaccessible (cf. D8.1–6=B7).[47] The visualisation of the fantastical world of the proem prepares us for the visualisation of something even further removed from our everyday experience, what-is.

Though the evidence is scanty, we can tell from D12=B10 that the *Doxa* developed this visual language:

> εἴσηι δ' αἰθερίαν τε φύσιν τά τ' ἐν αἰθέρι πάντα
> σήματα καὶ καθαρᾶς εὐαγέος ἠελίοιο
> λαμπάδος ἔργ' ἀίδηλα καὶ ὁππόθεν ἐξεγένοντο,
> ἔργα τε κύκλωπος πεύσηι περίφοιτα σελήνης
> καὶ φύσιν, εἰδήσεις δὲ καὶ οὐρανὸν ἀμφὶς ἔχοντα
> ἔνθεν ἔφυ τε καὶ ὥς μιν ἄγουσ(α) ἐπέδησεν Ἀνάγκη
> πείρατ' ἔχειν ἄστρων.
>
> And you will know the aethereal nature and all the signs
> That are in the aether, and of the pure, bright torch of the sun
> The blinding [*or* hidden] works, and from whence they came to be,
> And you will learn the wandering works of the round-eyed moon
> And its nature, and you will know the surrounding sky,
> From whence it was born and how Necessity, taking it, shackled it
> To have the limits of the stars.

[46] ἥδεται γὰρ ἡ διάνοια παντὸς ἀνθρώπου χειραγωγουμένη διὰ τῶν λόγων ἐπὶ τὰ ἔργα καὶ μὴ μόνον ἀκούουσα τῶν λεγομένων, ἀλλὰ καὶ τὰ πραττόμενα ὁρῶσα. Cf. also Aelius Aristides, *Smyrnaeus politicus* 17.8. On these passages, see Clay (2011b) 25–6.

[47] D8.1–6=B7 is usually taken as rejecting completely the value of sensory experience as a means of accessing reality (e.g. by Lesher [1984] 1–2; Coxon [2009] 308), although Laks (1999) 262–3 argues that it only rejects misuse of the senses. Similarly, de Rijk (1983) argues that Parmenides does not reject the sensible world, only the mortal understanding of it, as, in this fragment, the goddess is instructing us not to direct our senses down the way of not-being, but rather, down the way of being. He has been followed by Curd (1998) 60–2. Even if the target of D8.1–6=B7 is not sensory experience *in toto* but simply sensory experience as normally used, it does not necessarily follow that the entity described in the *Aletheia* is something that can be seen, and the adversative δέ at D8.5=B7.5 suggests that we are to grasp it by some faculty other than our senses.

εἴσηι and εἰδήσεις are usually translated as 'you will know', and these forms occur elsewhere in this sense.[48] But this lexeme is in origin a verb of seeing,[49] and the emphasis on the brightness of the objects described (the 'pure bright torch of the sun' and the starry sky) activates the implicit sense of, 'you shall see'. ἀίδηλα, translated here as 'blinding', supports this suggestion. It is a tricky word, sometimes used to mean 'hidden' and elsewhere, 'destructive', probably from an active sense of 'making invisible'.[50] Its etymology is explicable as an ἀ-privative + ἰδεῖν, a verb from the same root as εἴσηι and εἰδήσεις. Here, it may either mean the 'hidden' works of the sun, in reference to the Sun's journey during the night when it is invisible, or to the 'destructive' nature of the sun, in that it blinds those who look directly at it.[51] Whatever we take the reference of ἀίδηλα to be – and we may be justified in reading here a functional ambiguity – it develops, paradoxically, the visual theme introduced by εἴσηι: the youth will 'see' that which is either 'unseen' or that which is 'blinding'.

We are, then, to 'see' the items in the *Doxa*, many of which (the sun, the stars) are familiar from our normal sensory experience, but by that stage we have been warned that this is a world of poetic artifice, one that does not meet the conditions for true being. Through 'seeing' the unseeable, in the *Aletheia*, we come to 'see' the content of our sensory experience in a new light, as failing to conform to true being. Our visualisation in the *Doxa* thus prepares us to reinterpret our actual visual experience once the poem is over.

b The Vision

The poem could be said to provide a visual experience, not only in the sense that it enables us to visualise certain entities, but also in the broader, metaphorical sense that it offers the opportunity to see the world in a different way, from a new perspective. The wider narrative tradition in which the poem participates highlights this function. The story neatly fits an identifiable genre of myth that Bruce Louden has termed 'the vision', 'in which the protagonist is removed from the mortal plane, accompanied by

[48] εἴσομαι: *Il.* 1.548, Hp. *VM* 20, Ar. *Ach.* 332; εἰδήσω: *Od.* 7.327, Hdt. 7.234, Isoc. 1.44, Aen. Tact. 31.5.

[49] They are future tenses of the putative verb *εἴδω, 'I see', of which οἶδα is in origin a perfect tense. The same verb is used to form the aorist, εἶδον, of ὁράω. See LSJ *s.v.*

[50] See Chantraine *s.v.*

[51] The former sense is argued by Coxon (2009) 354; LM translate as 'blinding' (which I have followed), but also note the possible meanings of 'destructive', 'completely visible' and 'hidden'.

an otherworldly guide, who reveals to him a large truth, the "big picture", previously hidden from his view'.[52] Other ancient examples include the *katabasis* narratives of the *Odyssey*'s *Nekuia* scene, *Bilgames/Gilgamesh and the Netherworld* (an episode from the Gilgamesh cycle), *Aeneid* book 6, as well as a story from the Old Testament in which Saul uses a female necromancer to speak with the dead prophet Samuel (1 Sam. 28), Plato's allegory of the cave, and Cicero's *Somnium Scipionis*. In all these examples, visual language plays a prominent role in the revelation granted.[53] Louden does not mention Parmenides' poem, but it fits the scheme remarkably well: the youth leaves the mortal plane, accompanied by the Heliades as 'otherworldly guides', before the goddess fulfils this role in revealing to him, using visual terms, the 'big picture' that had been previously hidden from view. Furthermore, several of the examples of the genre are *katabasis* narratives, whilst Parmenides' chariot journey certainly *evokes* such a trip to the realm of the dead, even if its precise trajectory cannot ultimately be determined with certainty.[54]

Through such visions, the protagonist does not only learn new information, but must reassess his values in life. Odysseus learns from Teiresias the details of how to achieve his homecoming (*Od.* 11.100–37), but he also sees the punishment of the notorious wrongdoers, Tityos, Tantalus and Sisyphus (*Od.* 11.576–600) and learns from Achilles that it is better to be a serf to a pauper among the living than to rule over all the dead (*Od.* 11.489–91). These moralising details reveal to Odysseus part of the overall ethical framework of the world of the poem, one that has been seen to contrast pointedly with that of the *Iliad*.[55] Bilgames/Gilgamesh, after Enkidu does not return from the underworld, enlists the help of a young hero (Utu in the Sumerian version; Shamash in the Akkadian) to summon the phantom of his companion, who then reveals the posthumous fates of various types of individual, the happiest of whom appear to be men with many sons (*Netherworld* 255–306; *Gilgamesh* XII 96–153). Saul learns from

[52] Louden (2011) 197–221, quotation from 198.

[53] Odysseus repeatedly refers to whom he *saw* in the catalogue of heroines (*Od.* 11.235, 260, 271, 281, 298, 306, 321, 326), and Alcinous asks him if he *saw* any of his Greek comrades (371). Saul asks the necromancer what she *saw*, which she then relates to him (1 Sam. 13). In *Bilgames and the Netherworld*, Bilgames/Gilgamesh repeatedly asks the phantom of the dead Enkidu (in Andrew George's translation), 'Did you see . . . [*x type of person*]', and on each occasion, Enkidu responds, 'I saw him', George (1999) 187–90 (*Bilgames and the Netherworld*, lines 246–303) 194–5 (tablet XII of the 'Series of Gilgamesh', lines 102–53).

[54] On the controversy surrounding this issue, see n. 104 below.

[55] See Kullmann (1985). Achilles' statement to Odysseus contrasts with his choice for a short but glorious life at *Il.* 9.410–16, as commentators since the scholiasts have noted (e.g. Goldhill [1991] 105–6, who cites further scholarship). For a criticism of Kullmann's view, see Allan (2006).

the shade of the deceased prophet Samuel that Yahweh has turned away from him for his disobedience (1 Sam. 28.16–20).

Correspondingly, Parmenides' youth, in the *Doxa*, will learn about the origins of humanity (D46=B17; D49=B18) and the nature of human cognition (D51=B16), but he will also learn about the futility and fleetingness of mortal attitudes in contrast with the constancy of what-is. Most emphatically, D7=B6 criticises the ignorance of mortals (they are 'know-nothings', line 4), but it also hints at their limited lifespans, in referring to them contemptuously as ἄκριτα φῦλα (line 7), 'undiscerning [or 'indistinguishable'] tribes'. As Peter Kingsley has argued, the adjective ἄκριτα, though normally translated as active ('undiscerning') could also be understood passively ('indistinguishable') and the expression as a whole is modelled on the Homeric *hapax*, ἀκριτόφυλλος, 'of undistinguishable leafage' (LSJ *s.v.*), a term used to refer to a wooded mountain (*Il.* 2.868).[56] Parmenides' expression thus recalls the famous comparison between the fleeting generations of mortals and the seasonal regeneration of leaves mortals and leaves (*Il.* 6.146–9; Simon. *Eleg.* 19.2 W; Mimnermus, 2.1–5 W). This echo aligns the goddess's teachings with traditional wisdom concerning the ephemerality and insignificance of mortal experience of a kind that is amply paralleled in other *katabasis* narratives. Like the visions of the *Nekuia* or *Bilgames and the Underworld*, the goddess's claims are not merely ontological or theoretical, but also have implications for how we are to evaluate our status in the universe.

c Perspective and Character

Parmenides, then, fulfils the conception of literary truth that we met in the Introduction, in that his poem exposes his audience to a particular way of looking at the world. Of course, such a function could also be performed in prose, but it is characteristic of early Greek conceptions of song, a type of discourse that stereotypically transports its audience into an imagined world. This new perspective, as Plato recognised, has an axiological dimension: it assumes certain values, for instance, in the way in which the *Iliad* treats the death of a great warrior as worthy of lamentation, a principle that is rejected by Plato's Socrates (*Resp.* 3.387d–388d).[57] Songs or poems do not expose

[56] Kingsley (2003) 95–8.

[57] My understanding of Socrates' much-discussed views on poetry here is based on the studies of Burnyeat (1999) and Moss (2007).

objective, value-neutral perspectives, but those of particular individuals, whether the primary narrators or the characters of the narrative.[58] In this way, perspective is closely related to characterisation. For most of Parmenides' poem, we are granted the perspective of a vividly characterised individual. Unlike the generic youth, the goddess's lively use of language gives an indication of her appropriately self-assured personality. She makes universalising, omnitemporal claims (e.g. D6>B3; D7=B6.1–2; D8.27–35=B8.22–30) and uses intensifying expressions (e.g. 'That one *indeed, I tell you* is an *entirely undiscernible* path', D6>B2.6; '*I bid you* to reflect on these things', D7=B6.2; '*I tell you*, this is an entirely likely arrangement', D8.65=B8.60). Her awareness of her superior status is marked by frequent imperatives and imperatival infinitives (D6>B2.1; D10=B4.1; D8.2=B7.2; D8.3=B7.3; D8.57=B8.52), as well as future and optative second-person verbs that outline the limits of her addressee's possible actions (D6>B2.7–8; D10=B4.2; D8.11=B8.6; D8.41=B8.36; cf. D12=B10.1; D12=B10.5). Her use of anaphora, at D10=B4.2–4 and D8.27–9=B8.22–4, is paralleled nowhere more so than in Hesiod's *Works and Days* (5–7,182–4, 317–9, 578–80)[59] and further serves to indicate her didactic authority. Consistent with this high opinion of herself is a contempt for mortals, evident from her almost sarcastic rhetorical questions in D8>B8. These questions seem to imply that, for her, the nature of true reality is obvious, in spite of the profound uncertainties over her meaning of the repeatedly made assertion, '[it?] is', ἔστιν.[60] Through this characterisation, which would be accentuated in performance through gesture and intonation,[61] we are exposed to a distinctive perspective on the world in which mortals are supremely ignorant, and worthy of contempt.

[58] Cf. here Griffin (1986) 45–6, who shows that evaluative terms in Homer are far more frequent in direct speech than in that of the primary narrator, although note also de Jong (1988) on the primary narrator's value-judgements.

[59] Other examples from early hexameter (listed by West [1978] 139): *Theog.* 833–5, *Il.* 2.382–4, 23.315–16, 318, *Od.* 3.109–11.

[60] It is beyond my scope to pronounce a confident verdict on this gargantuan problem of Parmenidean interpretation, but I follow Mackenzie (1982) and Barrett (2004) in regarding this particular difficulty as functional and designed to draw us into considering precisely what it is to 'be' something. For summaries of earlier interpretations, see Kraus (2013) 461–3 and Palmer (2016) (though his summary is, naturally, partisan towards his own interpretation, without giving a fair impression that this is still an open question).

[61] For rhapsodic performance of direct speech as a kind of acting or impersonation, note Plato *Ion* 535b–e; *Resp.* 3.392d–395a. On the dramatic aspects of rhapsodic performance, see Herington (1985) 10–15, 51–4.

d The Emotional Trajectory of the Poem

Exposure to such a distinct perspective affects an audience's emotional response, though, of course, it does not necessarily prompt them to feel the same emotions as the character in question. Probably, most audience members would not themselves feel the contempt for humanity that the goddess expresses, nor should we assume that Parmenides would have intended such a mirrored reaction. It is notable that the youth, and not the goddess, is the primary narrator, a feature that creates an extra layer of distance between the author and her claims. But a number of features seem designed to make an audience feel the emotions that would be appropriate to the *youth*'s extraordinary situation. The focalisation of the proem, his generic nature, and the fact that he effectively drops out of the narrative once the goddess starts speaking, all encourage an audience to imagine themselves in his shoes. Though the poem has been dismissed as not especially 'moving',[62] the goddess's characterisation, as well as certain details of the proem and her speech, seem designed to have an emotional effect.

The hints that this is a journey to the realm of the dead create an ominous, uncanny tone. I have mentioned that certain details of the proem's topography recall Hesiod's description of Tartarus.[63] The choice of paths that the goddess offers the youth in later fragments (D6>B2, D7=B6, D8.1–6=B7) resembles the eschatology of the 'Orphic' gold tablets, and of Plato's eschatological myths, in which the deceased is offered a choice of which 'path' to take.[64] The youth's state of perturbation can be inferred from the fact that the goddess must reassure him that it is not an 'evil fate' (μοῖρα κακή) that has sent him, nor has he performed anything illicit (D4=B1.26–8). Indeed, this may be a reassurance that he has not died in spite of reaching such a destination, since the expression μοῖρα κακή, in Homer, occurs only in reference to the death of Peisander (*Il.* 13.602).[65] But in any case, her reassurances are somewhat undermined by her utter contempt for mortals (D7=B6).

A further factor that contributes to this sinister mood is the goddess's anonymity. Various possibilities have been suggested for her identity.[66]

[62] Even by one of the poem's more sympathetic commentators, Mourelatos (2008a) 35.

[63] See n. 39 above. On this relationship, see Palmer (2009) 54–5, who provides further bibliography. On the topography in particular, see Dolin (1962), Burkert (1969) 8–13 and Pellikaan-Engel (1974).

[64] On the connections between Parmenides and the gold tablets, see Feyerabend (1984); Sassi (1988); Ranzato (2015) 59–71; Tor (2017) 237, 244–6, 267–74. For Plato's adaptations of this eschatology, see Edmonds (2004) 159–220.

[65] Burkert (1969) 14, 25; Kingsley (1999) 61–2, 240.

[66] E.g. Dike: Deichgräber (1958) 6, 7, 37; Peitho: Mourelatos (2008a); Aither personified: Coxon (2009) 15 (although at 280–1 Coxon sees her as also named Dike); Mnemosyne: Pugliese Cratelli

The most plausible candidate is that she is Night, since the Heliades have come from the 'palace of Night' (D4=B1.9), and the goddess welcomes the youth to 'my home' (D4=B1.25).[67] But this possibility is problematised by the fact that Night is a fundamental feature of the world of the *Doxa*, a world which the goddess presents in negative terms in contrast with the *Aletheia* that she espouses. An alternative suggestion is that the goddess is left unnamed as she is a chthonic deity, given the superstition against uttering the names of the gods of the underworld.[68] The hints at *katabasis* support this possibility, as does the fact that the goddess, by giving the youth a choice of 'paths', places him, figuratively, at a *triodos*, a fork in the road. *Triodoi* were where the polluted remains of purification rituals were cast out, as well as the corpses of executed malefactors.[69] Here, travellers could invoke the protection of Hekate or Persephone, both chthonic deities who could be referred to as 'god of the wayside' (ἐνοδία θεός).[70] The considerations in favour of identifying the goddess as Night preclude us from labelling her as Persephone or Hecate with any degree of certainty, but her anonymity – or, if she is Night, the elliptical manner in which she is named – imbue her with the ominous tone appropriate for the frightening spirits of the underworld.

The unveiling of the Heliades (D4=B1.10), while foreshadowing the goddess's unveiling of true reality, is another disturbing detail. Veils were widely worn by women in Archaic and Classical Greece, especially among elites, but also among lower status groups. Lack of the veil or unveiling was taken as a sign of immodesty.[71] In seeing the unveiled faces of the Heliades,

(1988); Persephone: Kingsley (1999) 94; deliberately anonymous: Tarán (1965) 16; Floyd (1992) 255–6; Conche (1996) 56.

[67] As argued by Morrison (1955) 60; Mansfeld (1964): 244–7; Burkert (1969) 17 n. 37 (now asserted with greater confidence in the reprint of that article for his *Kleine Schriften* [2008]); West (1983) 109; Palmer (2009) 51–62; Primavesi (2013a). That Night should serve such an instructive character is paralleled by her role, in the Derveni and later Orphic theogonies, in instructing Zeus on how to overcome the first-born god (*OF* 6, 237, 238).

[68] Kingsley (1999) 94; see also Burkert (1969) 13–14, who sees the anonymity as a further initiatory aspect of the text. On the taboo over referring to certain gods by name, cf. Burkert (1985) 200, 428 n. 12; Parker (2017) 1–2, 5–6. Note e.g. Soph. *OC* 129–33; Pl. *Crat.* 403A.

[69] Eupol. Fr. 132 *PCG*; Pl. *Leg.* 9.873ab. See Halliwell (1986).

[70] See Halliwell (1986) 187. On the numinous quality of the crossroads, note also Theophr. *Char.* 16.14, with Diggle (2004) 358, 371.

[71] The relevant study is Llewellyn-Jones (2003) (esp. 121–88); see also Cairns (2002). Veiling seems to be a sign of αἰδώς (who herself, personified, is veiled at Hes. *Op.* 198–200) Cf. *Il.* 3.139–45; Eur. *Hipp.* 243–6, *IT* 372–6, *Ph.* 1485–92. Blank (1982) 169–70 rightly comments on the intimacy of the Heliades' gesture, regarding it as establishing a relationship of trust and citing as parallel Ap. Rhod. 4.1314–17. Whilst it may be designed to establish a relationship of trust in this way, it certainly also inspires fear, just as, in the example Blank cites, Jason turns his eyes away from the ἡρῶσσαι out of reverence for the goddesses (δαίμονας αἰδεσθείς).

the youth is granted an illicit perspective on these elite, divine (D4=B1.24) maidens. We may be reminded of how, in myth, such an unmediated vision of a goddess typically leads to the downfall of the viewer.[72] As Hera points out in the *Iliad*, 'gods are hard to look upon when they are manifest' (χαλεποὶ δὲ θεοὶ φαίνεσθαι ἐναργεῖς, *Il.* 20.131)[73] and in epiphany scenes, the appearance of a deity typically inspires awe and terror.[74] The image of the unveiled Heliades, then, is alluring but also potentially terrifying and prepares us for the face-to-face encounter with the fearsome goddess.

Yet after the unsettling proem and the fearsome encounter with the goddess, the *Doxa* seems to warrant quite a different response. More vividly than in the *Aletheia*, we are granted a god's-eye perspective on the world, in which we see not only the constellations, the sun and the sky but their origins (D12=B10.3; D12=B10.6; D11=B11) and limits (D12=B10.6–7), as if we are taken to the very chronological and spatial ends of the universe itself. In D14=B12, we view the cosmos on a wider scale than would be possible for mortals to see literally, since we 'see' the cosmic rings that make up the universe (and which presumably surround the Earth) with the *daimon* at their centre, who steers all things and rules over sexual reproduction.[75] Greek sources consistently present such images of the celestial bodies as a source of 'awe', 'wonder' or 'amazement'.[76]

A pertinent example is the Iliadic shield of Achilles, which depicts the Earth, the sky (*ouranos*), the sea, and the constellations (*Il.* 18.483–9), as well as more detailed scenes from the world of mortals.[77] Hephaestus

[72] Most famously in the myth of Actaeon as it is told by Callimachus (*Hymn* 5.107–18) and Ovid (*Met.* 3.238–52), where he is punished for encountering the bathing Artemis, but this version probably existed already before the Hellenistic period (see Gantz [1993] 480). Also relevant are Ixion, punished for his passion for Hera (e.g. Pind. *Pyth.* 2.35–40; see Gantz [1993] 718–19), and Semele, who perishes after wanting to see Zeus as he appears to Hera (this detail is made clear at Diod. Sic. 3.64.3–4; 4.2.2–3, but may already have occurred in Aeschylus' *Semele*, see Gantz [1993] 472–7).

[73] Cf. also *Od.* 16.161, 3.420 and 7.201, where the extraordinary status of the Phaeacians is indicated by the fact that the gods did use to appear manifest to them; *Od.* 13.312–13, where Odysseus claims it is 'painful', even for a very expert man, to recognise Athena.

[74] Especially analogous is the apparent scorn of Hesiod's Muses (*Theog.* 26). Also comparable is Anchises' frightened response to Aphrodite when she reveals her identity to him at *hVen.* 181–3, noted as a standard element by Faulkner (2008) 234–5. Cf. *Od.* 16.179; *h.Ap.* 440–7 (note esp. 447, μέγα γὰρ δέος ἔμβαλ' ἑκάστῳ); *h.Cer.* 188–90 (note 190, τὴν δ' αἰδώς τε σέβας τε ἶδὲ χλωρὸν δέος εἷλεν); *h.Hom.* 7.32ff. (note 37, ναύτας δὲ τάφος λάβε πάντας ἰδόντας). See further Richardson (1974) 208–9, 252.

[75] The precise reconstruction of the cosmology is tricky, but for a plausible attempt, see Morrison (1955) 60–2, with a useful diagram on p. 63.

[76] E.g. Pl. *Tim.* 47a–c; Arist. *Metaph.* 1.3.983b; [Longinus] *Subl.* §35.4.

[77] Reinhardt (1993) 297 also briefly compares Parmenides' composition of the *Doxa* to Homer's description of the shield, on the basis that both authors were drawn not to 'things in themselves

professes to make arms for the hero in such a manner that 'whoever sees it will be amazed (θαυμάσσεται)' (*Il.* 18.467), yet the Myrmidons cannot bear to look at the shield's amazing level of detail through fear (*Il.* 19.14–15). Achilles on the other hand, as a mark of his quasi-divine status, takes pleasure in its appearance (*Il.* 19.18–19), enraged though he is.[78] Of course, there are reasons why the shield is terrifying that would not apply to the *Doxa*, and the divine skill required to create such a supernatural physical artefact would not be necessary for the goddess's verbal description, but ecphrasis invites a comparison between the verbal and the visual. The 'amazement' that Hephaestus envisages for the arms is programmatic for our response to the Iliadic poet's description of the shield. 'Wonder' seems a fitting response both to the poet's level of detail and to the cosmological content of the image. Parmenides' cosmological *Doxa* appears to have been similarly detailed and could have bestowed an equivalent feeling of divine elevation.[79]

e Parmenides and the Sublime

We are, then, moved from a state of fear, and awareness of our mortal insignificance, to an elevated, divine position from which we view the cosmos and its operations in their entirety. A description from a distinguished Latin literary critic of the sublime qualities of Lucretius seems peculiarly apt:

> first [the Lucretian sublime] generates a sense of inadequacy in whoever happens to contemplate it; then it elevates the reader's mind to a higher level of understanding and fills him with enthusiasm.[80]

In two substantial, recent studies, James Porter has argued that the Presocratics discovered matter and therefore the sublime, since they take the concept of matter to its limits.[81] The aesthetic approach to these authors is to be welcomed, but it is not clear, at least until Anaxagoras,

but an image'. The shield would later be allegorised as depicting various philosophical cosmologies (including that of Empedocles), on which see Hardie (1985).

[78] On these characters' response to the shield of Achilles, see especially Purves (2010) 46–55 and Scully (2003).

[79] Note Plut. *Col.* 1114B–C; Simpl. *in Cael.* 559.26–7 on this section's level of detail, and D62=B19, indicating that the account is eternally applicable.

[80] Conte (1994) 28. His comment, on Lucr. 1.271–6, is similarly applicable to Parmenides: 'the listener has had to confront an image that has carried him to the very limits of exaltation and made him a "great spectator"'. For possible allusions to Parmenides in Lucretius, see Rumpf (2005).

[81] Porter (2010) 138–75, (2016) 415–31, 547–54, though he does not mention Parmenides in this context.

that they would have articulated a distinction between 'matter' or the 'material' from the immaterial in any more explicit way than is found in earlier texts.[82] Be that as it may, although the 'sublime' would not have been recognised as a distinct critical concept for Parmenides or his audience, the poem displays some striking resemblances to Longinus' examples of the quality. As an instance of *phantasia*, an author's visualisation, he cites the chariot journey from Euripides' *Phaethon* (*Subl.* §15.3–4), a myth that is also evoked in Parmenides' proem, with its chariot led by the Heliades. According to Longinus, Euripides creates the impression that 'the soul of the writer was travelling with him on the chariot, and, sharing the danger with the horses, had taken wing with them' (15.4). Parmenides' proem invites a similar reading: we might assume that Parmenides' 'soul was travelling with him on the chariot', especially since the journey is narrated in the first person and was read as a journey of the soul in antiquity (R8=Sext. Emp. *Math.* 7.112–14). Longinus expands on this notion that the sublime author's soul 'takes wing' when outlining the principle of literary 'genius' (*megalophuia*), in a passage which bears further resemblance to Parmenides' poem:

> Τί ποτ' οὖν εἶδον οἱ ἰσόθεοι ἐκεῖνοι καὶ τῶν μεγίστων ἐπορεξάμενοι τῆς συγγραφῆς, τῆς δ' ἐν ἅπασιν ἀκριβείας ὑπερφρονήσαντες; πρὸς πολλοῖς ἄλλοις ἐκεῖνο, ὅτι ἡ φύσις οὐ ταπεινὸν ἡμᾶς ζῷον οὐδ' ἀγεννὲς †ἐ..κρινε τὸν ἄνθρωπον, ἀλλ' ὡς εἰς μεγάλην τινὰ πανήγυριν εἰς τὸν βίον καὶ εἰς τὸν σύμπαντα κόσμον ἐπάγουσα, θεατάς τινας τῶν ἄθλων αὐτῆς ἐσομένους καὶ φιλοτιμοτάτους ἀγωνιστάς, εὐθὺς ἄμαχον ἔρωτα ἐνέφυσεν ἡμῶν ταῖς ψυχαῖς παντὸς ἀεὶ τοῦ μεγάλου καὶ ὡς πρὸς ἡμᾶς δαιμονιωτέρου. (3) διόπερ τῇ θεωρίας καὶ διανοίας τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ἐπιβολῇ οὐδ' ὁ σύμπας κόσμος ἀρκεῖ, ἀλλὰ καὶ τοὺς τοῦ περιέχοντος πολλάκις ὅρους ἐκβαίνουιν αἱ ἐπίνοιαι, καὶ εἴ τις περιβλέψαιτο ἐν κύκλῳ τὸν βίον, ὅσῳ πλέον ἔχει τὸ περιττὸν ἐν πᾶσι καὶ μέγα καὶ καλόν, ταχέως εἴσεται πρὸς ἃ γεγόναμεν.
>
> What, then did those godlike men see, who aimed at the greatest achievements of writing, but disdained exactitude in all areas? Besides many other things, it was that nature did not [make?] us to be a low animal, nor man to be an ignoble thing, but led us into life and into the whole cosmos as if to a great festival, to be spectators at the contests and also the most glory-loving contestants. She engendered in our souls an irresistible desire always for everything that is great and, in relation to ourselves, supernatural. (3) For

[82] On this topic see, recently, Betegh (2016) 415–20, who points out that all allegedly 'incorporeal' items in Presocratic cosmologies are divine or godlike cosmic agents, and so conform to the traditional notion that divine bodies do not behave like ordinary objects. Contrast Curd (2013a), (2013b) (who identifies a theory of incorporeality) against Renehan (1980) (for whom the theory only arises with Plato).

> that reason, the whole cosmos is not sufficient for the range of human speculation and intellect, but thoughts often go beyond even the limits of the boundary [*sc.* of the cosmos], and if anyone were to look around at his life in circumspect, how much the extraordinary, and the great and the beautiful abounds in all things, he will swiftly know that for which we were born. (*Subl.* 35.2–3)[83]

The great writers are *isotheoi*, godlike; Parmenides presents the youth's education as one of *homoiōsis theōi*, in which he is granted a divine perspective. Man's capacity to transcend his immediate experience is something that these authors have 'seen'; the content of Parmenides' poem, as we have seen, is presented in highly visual terms. The whole *kosmos* is said to be insufficient for mortal speculation and thought; Parmenides' goddess similarly denigrates the *kosmos* as 'deceptive' and offers a vision of true reality separate from it, but accessible to thought. Most strikingly of all, mortal thoughts are capable of escaping its limits; Parmenides' proem, like Euripides' *Phaethon*, depicts a journey beyond the normal limits of the *kosmos*.

These resemblances are not coincidental. Whether or not we take the author of *On the Sublime* to be the third-century CE Platonist philosopher Cassius Longinus, the treatise is part of a Greek philosophical tradition to which Parmenides is forefather. The idea that mortals can transcend the limits of the perceptible cosmos through thought, and that by this means they can most closely assimilate to the divine, seems distinctly Platonist and stemming from those parts of Plato that are most heavily indebted to Parmenides.[84] Longinus' more specific image of departure from the cosmos seems indebted to the myth of Plato's *Phaedrus*, of the chariot journey of the soul (246a3–b4), which itself has been seen to be influenced by Parmenides' journey.[85] With this lengthy philosophical heritage, there are, of course, divergences from Parmenides. Longinus seems more optimistic about the cognitive faculties of humans in general than the goddess. But in spite of the chronological distance between *On Sublimity* and Parmenides,

[83] My translation here is in part adapted from Russell's in Russell and Winterbottom (1972). In spite of the textual uncertainty in the second sentence, the overall sense is clear enough. For τοῦ περιέχοντος as 'the boundary' of the cosmos, rather than Russell's 'our surroundings', see Halliwell (2011) 343 n. 35.

[84] Especially the *Phaedrus* myth (see n. 85 below), but note also *Resp.* 5.467e–477b with Palmer (1999) 56–87; and *Tim.* 90a–d, in the context of a 'likely account', that is, one framed in pointedly similar terms to Parmenides' *Doxa* (see Bryan [2012] 161–95; Johansen [2016] 18–19). On the Platonist aspects of *On the Sublime*, see Heath (2013) 169–79.

[85] Halliwell (2011) 343, 352 argues for the influence of the *Phaedrus* here. On the relationship between Parmenides and the *Phaedrus*, see Palmer (1999) 17–30 and Slaveva-Griffin (2003).

the treatise can, like other works of ancient literary criticism, be seen as a crystallisation of trends that are already in evidence in much earlier texts.[86] The Longinus passage gives an apt impression of the sort of enthralling and enthusing response envisioned for Parmenides' audience, once they have grasped the goddess's teachings. The responses to the Longinian sublime, of 'ecstasy' (ἔκστασις), along with 'wonder' and 'astonishment' (σὺν ἐκπλήξει . . . τὸ θαυμάσιον, *Subl.* §1.3–4) seem appropriate for Parmenides' imagery. The goddess is more pessimistic than Longinus about the mental capacity of mortals, but the notion that we can, at least temporarily, transcend our mortal limitations is implicit in her education of the mortal youth.

f Mystic Initiation

This emotional trajectory has religious associations and is an aspect of the poem's evocation of Mystic initiation.[87] Just as Parmenides' poem culminates in the sublime vision of the *Doxa*, initiation into the highest grade of the Eleusinian mysteries reached its climax, after a journey on the 'sacred way', in a 'viewing' of a certain spectacle in the *Anaktoron/anaktora*, the innermost chapel of the *telestērion*.[88] Though nominally secret, our sources tell us that what was revealed was an ear of wheat, and perhaps, a statue of Demeter, and a phallus, amid a shining light.[89] In any case, this process is referred to as *epopteia*, a 'viewing', and those who have been initiated are said to have 'seen' the mysteries.[90] What was seen was ineffable, both in the sense that it was forbidden to speak of it and, at least according to one prominent historian of religion, in the sense that it was hard to put into

[86] On this topic, see Hunter (2009), who discusses *On the Sublime* at 128–68.

[87] As Burkert (1969) 14, 25 pointed out, mystic initiation is suggested by the objectless use of εἰδότα, 'knowing man' (D4=B1.3), for which the main parallels refer to initiates into the Eleusinian mysteries (Andoc. *de Myst.* 30, [Eur.] *Rhes.* 973, and Ar. *Nub.* 1241). The concordances with the so-called 'Orphic' gold tablets also support this notion (see n. 67 above). Tor (2017) 254–7, 267–74 discusses Parmenides' relationship to mystic initiation thoroughly. Cf. also D4=B1.28 with *OF* 3.

[88] Paus. 1.36.2 refers to the road to Eleusis as the 'sacred way' (ὁδὸν ἱεράν). For reconstructions of the process of initiation, from the complex variety of sources, see Burkert (1983) 248–97, Clinton (2003) and Bremmer (2014) 1–20.

[89] Hippol. *Haer.* 5.8.39 (for the ear of wheat); Tert. *Adv. Valent.* 1 (for the phallus); Plato *Phdr.* 250b–c, Plut. fr. 178 Sandbach, Dio Chrys. *Or.* 12.33 (for the light). See Burkert (1983) 275–7, Clinton (2003) 65–6 and Bremmer (2014) 11–15.

[90] As Bremmer (2014) 15 writes, 'the importance of "seeing" and "showing" is continuously stressed by our sources as a fundamental component of the highest degree of initiation', citing *hDem.* 480; Pindar, fr. 137.1; Soph. fr. 753.2; Eur. *Her.* 613, *Hipp.* 25; Andoc. *de Myst.* 31; Ael. Arist. *Or.* 22.2. Note also Plato *Phdr.* 250b–c. Cf. also Burkert (1983) 274, 'The goal of initiation is the path to Eleusis and to seeing what occurred in the great chamber of initiation on the sacred night.'

words.[91] There is some evidence to suggest that, in the period leading up to this 'viewing', the first-time participants, or *mustai*, had to wander, blindfolded, in a search for *Kore*/*Persephone* (in imitation of Demeter's search for Persephone), aided by their mystagogues, friends who had already been initiated, whilst other *epoptai* (those who had been initiated in previous years) looked on.[92] This would explain why the process leading up to the viewing is frequently described by ancient sources as a fearsome experience.[93] Like the initiates, the youth has undergone a fearsome journey along a sacred path, at the end of which there is a divine revelation of a truth that could not be expressed in ordinary mortal speech, resulting in a superior status. The goddess is herself similar to a mystagogue in guiding him. As a consequence of her teaching, he is able to 'look' on at the mortals who, in the manner of the *mustai*, are wandering blindly (D7=B6).

These parallels should not lead us to conclude, as some have,[94] that the poem is really a mystic text, intended to represent an actual process of initiation and to induce a similar experience in its audience. There is no mention of ritual,[95] and, as we have seen, the early reception history of the poem counts against the possibility that it was designed for a group of initiates (see Section 1 above). Rather than offering a model for a literal initiation into a particular mystery cult, the poem offers the possibility of an emotional experience which in some respects overlaps with the familiar (even if nominally secret) experience of mystery-initiates. The hints of initiation illustrate how the youth's acquisition of knowledge grants him a privileged status over other mortals.

g The Reception of Parmenides' Poem

Some might object that the poem fails to affect its recipients in such a manner. Many readers, ancient and modern, have experienced puzzlement and frustration rather than any life-changing transformation.[96] But certain moments in its reception suggest that it inspired awe in at

[91] Burkert (1987a) 69, discussing Procl. *In Remp.* 2.108.17–30 Kroll and Aristotle fr. 15=Synesius *Dio* 10 p. 48a.

[92] See Clinton (2003) 65–6. Plut. fr. 178 attests to the fearsome 'wandering'; Lactant. *Div. inst.* 23 to the search for *Kore*.

[93] Plut. fr. 178; Proclus, *Theol. Plat.* 3.18; Aesch. fr. 387; Plut. *Ages.* 24.7; Ael. Arist. 22.2; Luc. *Cataplus* 22. See Bremmer (2014) 13–14, who suggests that the fear may have been caused not by blindfolded wandering (*pace* Clinton) but by the image of a female monster with snaky hair.

[94] See n. 6 above.

[95] Contrast e.g. the allusions to ritual in the *Homeric Hymn to Demeter* 472–82.

[96] See the scholarship cited at n. 1 above.

least some of its ancient readers.[97] The Platonic description of Parmenides as 'venerable and awesome' (αἰδοῖός ... δεινός τε, *Tht.* 183e)[98] could be taken, like other ancient biographical comments on authors, as a response to Parmenides' poetry. The goddess is certainly 'venerable and awesome' in her powers of deduction and her contempt for mortals. More explicitly, Plutarch includes Parmenides in a list of authors (also including Archilochus, Phocylides, Euripides and Sophocles) with whom one might find a particular fault, in spite of the fact that 'each one of them is praised for the special faculty by which he is endowed by nature to move us and draw us on' (*De aud. poet.* 13 45A–B=R2b=A16).[99] The comment that the poem 'moves' us refers in particular to its ability to move us emotionally.[100] Elsewhere, Plutarch describes Parmenides and Empedocles as 'borrowing from poetry its weight and metre, like a chariot, in order to escape the pedestrian' (κεχρημένοι παρὰ ποιητικῆς ὥσπερ ὄχημα τὸν ὄγκον καὶ τὸ μέτρον, ἵνα τὸ πεζὸν διαφύγωσιν, *De aud. poet.* 2 16C=A15). The expression deploys what appears to have been a standard Imperial-era image in figuring verse as a 'chariot' (ὥσπερ ὄχημα) and prose as 'pedestrian' or 'on the floor' (τὸ πεζὸν),[101] but it is unlikely to be a coincidence that the image of the chariot is also used by both Parmenides and Empedocles (Parmenides D4=B1; Empedocles D44=B3.5). The Parmenidean version is evoked in particular because the chariot mentioned by Plutarch soars away from the ground level ('fleeing the pedestrian'), just as Parmenides' chariot, in following the path of the sun, appears to travel across the sky. Plutarch's comment identifies an elevated tone in Parmenides' verse, which corresponds to the elevating effect that we have identified in the *Doxa*, in granting us a divine perspective on the cosmos. But even if, in practice, a transformative experience of the poem has rarely been realised, the narrative tempts us with its possibility, creating the impression that, if only we could understand the goddess's teachings, our outlook on the world would be radically altered.

[97] For an overview of the reception of Parmenides' poetry in later ancient Greek texts, see Popa (2000).

[98] Adapting an expression used of Priam at *Il.* 3.172.

[99] ἕκαστός γε μὴν ἐπαινεῖται κατὰ τὸ ἴδιον τῆς δυνάμεως, ᾧ κινεῖν καὶ ἄγειν πέφυκεν (45B). The passage comes in a section in which Plutarch argues that a good listener should find something to praise in any scholarly lecture, in spite of its faults.

[100] Emotions are said to 'move' their subjects in Greek from at least as early as Aesch. *Cho.* 289.

[101] See Hunter and Russell (2011) 88. Cf. Strabo 1.2.6.

b The Emotions and Parmenides' Philosophy

If this interpretation is accepted, we can offer an explanation for Parmenides' use of hexameter narrative that differs both from that of Mourelatos and from the 'esoteric' interpretations. Traditional patterns provide a basis, not only for Parmenides' conceptions of intellectual error and logical necessity, but also for the cognitive and emotional experience that intellectual inquiry involves. As in Odysseus' *Nekuia*, Bilgames/Gilgamesh's vision of the netherworld, and the process of mystic initiation, a frightening experience leads up to a transformative revelation that alters the protagonist's perspective on the world. In Parmenides' poem, the protagonist slips out of the narrative so that the audience themselves can feel imaginatively the emotions that are elsewhere experienced by heroes in the third person. Through presenting a model of this process with such emotive associations, Parmenides gives an impression of what it would be like to comprehend the object of true reality, an entity that seems so hard to capture in ordinary language.

5 Poetry and Symbolism

As a heuristic, I have distinguished the destructive from the positive functions of Parmenides' use of poetry. On the one hand, it illustrates the deceptiveness and malleability of mortal senses, whilst on the other, it leads us to an imagined encounter with true reality. But these two functions are closely intertwined. For, as we saw in the case of Xenophanes, our immersion into the imagined world of the poem invites critical reflection on the triangular relationship between that world, the world of our senses, and the world of true reality. One means by which Parmenides prompts this kind of reflection is in phrasing his language and imagery in such a manner as to provoke an exploration of their deeper, symbolic significance.

a Intratextuality

This feature is evident in the intratextual reverberations of particular words and images across the poem. The opening fragment prefigures certain details of the *Doxa*. The peculiar focus on the chariot's whirling wheels (D4=B1.7–8) is echoed in the fiery cosmic rings in the *Doxa* (D14=B12; D15<A37). Both sections feature a *daimon* who is not clearly identified (D4=B1.3; D14=B12). Most obviously, the paths of 'Night and Day'

foreshadow the component elements of the cosmology. There are also connections between these entities and the *Aletheia*: the 'paths' of Night and Day, once the goddess starts speaking, become the paths of is and is-not, while the language that is used of the two elements in the *Doxa* recalls the outline of what-is.[102] These correspondences have led some commentators, starting with Aristotle (*Gen. corr.* 1.3, 318b7–8), to regard Light/Day and Night as allegorical labels for, respectively, Being and Not-Being,[103] but if they are allegorical in this manner then they are conspicuously imperfect representations of those two possibilities. The contrasts are significant: Day and Night alternate, whereas what-is is unchanging. The bright objects of the *Doxa* move, but what-is is unmoving. Night, unlike what-is-not, is an entity that can be pointed out and cognised (cf. D6>B2.5–8; D8.13–14=B8.8–9). Night and Day/Light mix with one another (D51=B16), whereas what-is is unmixed (cf. D8.47–54=B8.42–9). Whether or not we are to regard Day/Light and Night as 'allegories', the fact that they share the path imagery and certain linguistic similarities with the *Aletheia* encourages us to reflect upon how the sensible world, with its alternations of Night and Day, might relate to true reality.

b Intertextuality

In addition to this intratextual approach, sources from outside of the poem itself enable us to extrapolate the symbolic meanings that Parmenides' language and imagery could have conveyed for his earliest audiences. Of the surviving fragments, the allusive proem most clearly draws upon a variety of different traditions with different possible connotations. The journey has variously been regarded as a successful re-enactment of Phaethon's chariot ride, an ascent to Olympus, a *katabasis* to the land of the dead, a process of mystic initiation, or an adaptation of Odysseus' travels.[104] The references to these various traditions can be interpreted in

[102] See n. 31 above.

[103] This view has been endorsed by Vlastos (1946) 73–4; Primavesi (2005); and myself in Mackenzie (2017), though I would no longer subscribe to it so strongly. Cf. also *Metaph.* 1.5, 986b18=R12=A24, which expresses a similar, but subtly different interpretation.

[104] E.g. Phaethon: Kranz (1916); Bowra (1937) 103–4; Palmer (2009) 56 with n. 16; *katabasis*: Morrison (1955) 59–60; Kingsley (1999) esp. 50–3; Palmer (2009) 55–6; cf. Burkert (1969) 1–15 (who sees it as a journey to a place 'beyond', rather than, strictly speaking, a *katabasis*); Odysseus: Havelock (1958); *anabasis*: Diels (1897) 7–8; Bowra (1937); Fränkel (1975a) 1–6; Kahn (2009) 210–25; mystic initiation: Burkert (1969) 5; Kingsley (1999) 62; Palmer (2009) 58. Mourelatos (2008a) 11–41 argues that there are shared motifs, but not direct allusions to other journeys. For an overview of this debate with further references, see Tor (2017) 347–59.

light of Parmenides' doctrinal claims. To succeed where Phaethon failed would be to surpass mortal limitations and to enjoy the traditionally all-seeing perspective of the Sun.[105] The passage through the gates (D4=B1.20–1) adapts the Iliadic description of Hera driving her chariot through the gates of Olympus (*Il.* 5.749–52=8.393–6),[106] thereby hinting that the youth's journey is one of *homoiōsis theōi*. A process of divinisation is also implicit in the evocations of *katabasis* and initiation, since initiation in various sources is depicted as a symbolic death and rebirth and, in at least some instances, promised the attainment of divine status.[107] The associations of these images therefore hint at the *Doxa*'s theory of epistemology, in which the acquisition of knowledge amounts to an assimilation to the divine.[108]

In assessing the relationships with the Phaethon myth, *katabasis* poetry and mystic initiation, we have to make do with fragmentary or later evidence. With the *Odyssey*, we are on firmer ground, but if we can analyse Parmenides' response to this epic in greater detail than the other references it is also because his allusions to it are particularly rife. In a much-cited article, Havelock first identified the full extent of these allusions, concluding that the *Odyssey* provided a model for a journey outside of the ordinary realm, with Odysseus's reckless crew standing for the ignorant mortals.[109] Mourelatos refined Havelock's argument with a closer examination of the relationship between the *Odyssey*'s language of journeying and the arguments of the *Aletheia*.[110] With a greater focus on the epistemological presuppositions of early epic, James Lesher has shown that the goddess guides the youth through an inferential process that has much in common with the recognition scenes of the *Odyssey*.[111] Yet Parmenides' engagement with the *Odyssey* can be explored

[105] E.g. *Il.* 3.277=*Od.* 11.109, 12.323.

[106] The expression in Parmenides τῆι ῥα δι' αὐτέων (D4=B1.20) is paralleled nowhere else but in the near-identical phrase in these Iliadic passages, τῇ ῥα δι' αὐτάων (*Il.* 5.752, 8.396), describing the movement of Hera's chariot. The gates in Homer are guarded by the Horai, one of whom was Dike (along with Eunomia and Eirene, see Hes. *Theog.* 901–2), who guards the door in Parmenides' proem.

[107] On initiation as symbolic death and rebirth (in a pagan context) see Burkert (1987a) 99–101 and note the key sources, Plut. fr. 178 Sandbach and Apuleius *Met.* 11.21.1. Bernabé (2014) argues that the ritual described in the Derveni papyrus is most likely to be an initiation that involves an *imitatio mortis*. For initiation and divinisation, see Tor (2017) 270–3, and note especially *OF* 487.4, 488.9.

[108] Tor (2015) 22–32 and Tor (2017) 277–84. See similarly Long (1996) 146.

[109] Havelock (1958). For further parallels and possible allusions, see Floyd (1992) and the commentary of Coxon (2009).

[110] Mourelatos (2008a) 17–25, 31–4.

[111] Lesher (1994) 27–34, (1999) 239. Most conspicuously, both Eurykleia and Penelope recognise the truth of the disguised Odysseus' identity through his *semata* (*Od.* 19.217, 23.110, 206), just as the youth is to recognise the *semata* of the goddess (D8.7=B8.2). On this term in the *Odyssey* and its relationship to the vocabulary of *noos* and *aletheia*, see Nagy (1990) 202–22.

still further. We saw above that the imagery of the Sirens hints at the seductive and deceptive nature of the *Doxa*. More generally, the *Odyssey* persistently plays on the themes of the truthfulness of song and the accuracy of names, themes that recur prominently in Parmenides' poem. Famously, the first word of the *Odyssey* is the unspecified 'man' rather than 'Odysseus', and the hero himself is not named until line 21. As Norman Austin argued, this forms part of the wider theme of 'name-magic' in the poem: Odysseus' main mistake will be in revealing his name to Polyphemus (*Od.* 9.502–36), whilst the climactic recognition scene, in which the nurse Eurykleia recognises the disguised the Odysseus for who he is, is also the point at which we learn the true origins of Odysseus' name (19.386–475).[112] Parmenides borrows this technique in the proem, refraining from identifying the horses, the path, the *daimon*, the youth or the goddess. Although the path seems most plausibly to be that of the Sun, the narrator is notably elliptical in his reference to it. The 'path of the *daimon*, which carries the knowing mortal to every city' –[113] an expression that may be modelled on the *Odyssey*'s 'man who . . . saw the cities and got to know the minds of many men' (*Od.* 1.1, 3) – tantalises us with the possibility that it is a familiar road whilst refraining from making its identity explicit. This reticence assumes a particular significance within the wider context of the poem, in the stress placed on the act of 'naming' in the later fragments. The anonymity of these key figures in the proem invites speculation as to their identity but also prefigures the point that names themselves are misleading and superficial. The recollection of the *Odyssey*, then, raises the themes of naming and identity that will be so important in the goddess's arguments.

In the face of this variety of associations, scholars have sometimes attempted to pin down singular referents to the proem's language and imagery, as if all audience members would have shared assumptions about the topography of the extraordinary locations mentioned,[114] but this notion is highly implausible, since what little evidence we have reveals the existence of various different accounts of the cosmic geography outside of the mortal realm.[115] On the other hand, Mourelatos has argued that Parmenides' use of ostensibly incompatible symbols is a function of his

[112] Austin (1972).

[113] See Lapini (2013) 37–86 in support of reading here κατὰ πάντ' ἄστη as a conjectural emendation for the manuscripts' incomprehensible πάντ' ἄτη (even though it was falsely thought by Mutschmann to occur in the oldest MS of Sextus Empiricus, as Coxon [1968] discovered).

[114] The methodological principle that the proem could only have one frame of reference is espoused explicitly by Havelock (1958) 135–6, but even more recent commentators (e.g. Palmer [2009] 54–61) have been similarly reductive in approach.

[115] Compare the various accounts in Hesiod's *Theogony*, Mimnermus fr. 12 W and Stesichorus fr. 8 Finglass. See the study of Romm (1992), esp. 9–31.

'archaic mentality',[116] but a poet may make use conflicting images as a result of a deliberate choice in order to create certain effects and not necessarily as a consequence of a pre-logical or mythical way of thinking. In fact, Parmenides' choice of multiple frames of reference seems quite deliberate. He self-consciously inscribes the poem within a multifarious poetic tradition when referring to the road as πολύφημος (D4=B1.2), a word usually translated in the passive sense of 'far-fabled' or 'far-famed'. The adjective thus indicates that the path has already been the subject of many songs.[117] Yet, in its two Homeric occurrences, both in the *Odyssey*, it seems to have a more active meaning, in describing the *agora* (*Od.* 2.150, 'Of many voices', cf. Hdt. 5.79) and the singer Phemius (πολύφημος ἀοιδός, 'singer of many songs' *Od.* 22.376). Pindar uses it of the choral singing of a dirge ('Of many voices', *Isthm.* 8.58). In Parmenides, it may simply be left undetermined whether the voice is active or passive, but the active usage leaves open the possibility that the road is 'of many songs', not only in the sense that the particular path has been sung of many times, but also in the meta-literary sense that this particular poetic journey alludes to multiple previous ones. The self-consciousness of this variety prompts us to ponder the motivation for these different references and, in particular, to consider their possible relationship to the claims put forth so forcefully by the goddess.

c Allegory and Subtext

Rather than following any single familiar route, the proem is suggestive, hinting, through underdetermined details, through language that will be echoed later in the poem and through allusions to other texts and traditions, that this journey bears a significance that goes beyond its overt meaning. It is this quality that has led commentators, since at least as early as Sextus Empiricus, to regard the proem as an allegory of enlightenment. Recent scholars have rejected the label of 'allegory' on grounds of anachronism.[118] Certainly, Sextus' interpretation of the proem (*Math.* 7.112–14=R8) as the departure of the rational soul is both internally

[116] Mourelatos (2008a) 29–30. Cf. similarly Gheerbrant (2017) 647. This type of explanation was influentially promoted in the early twentieth century by Lévy-Bruhl (especially in *La Mentalité primitive*, Paris, 1922), but for cogent criticisms (with particular respect to the symbolic/scientific dichotomy), see Lloyd (1990) 14–38.

[117] Tarán (1965) 10 argues for an active sense of '"uttering many things," i.e. bestowing knowledge'.

[118] Gemelli Marciano (2008) 26; Graham (2010) 234. For a measured defence of the allegorical interpretation, see Granger (2010) 33–4.

inconsistent and suspiciously Platonising.[119] But the impulse to seek an underlying significance to the journey in terms of the fundamental philosophical principles it promotes is not anachronistic. As we saw in the Introduction, some of our earliest surviving texts presuppose such a mode of interpretation.

If the allegorical approach is objectionable, it is because it assumes that there is only one possible correct interpretation that the proem encodes, whereas the multiplicity of its references suggests otherwise. Most commentators would agree that the passage, in depicting a journey outside the familiar realm, symbolises an intellectual process that treats the familiar world of mortal experience as deceptive, yet the symbolic significance can be explored further, into more subjective territory. The wheels may foreshadow the rings of the *Doxa*, and the allusions to the *Odyssey* may recall the epic's themes of naming and identity, but not all readers or audience members are likely to pick up on these details. With symbolic texts, one can never be quite sure how far the interpretation can legitimately be taken.[120] But what may be more important, with regard to the poem's didactic purpose, is the fact that it invites this sort of subtextual reading to begin with. Such a hermeneutic process mirrors the way in which we are to look beneath our sensory experience in order to identify an underlying true reality. In this way, Parmenides' use of a symbolic form of discourse can be regarded as a strategy to circumvent the problems with mortal language identified by the goddess: though language reflects the deceptive, pluralistic world of mortal experience, with Parmenides' language, we are to look beyond its overt meaning if we are to understand true, unchanging reality.

This is not only the case with the proem and the *Doxa*, the sections of the poem that reflect the deceptive world. The *Aletheia* develops the symbolism of the proem and resembles certain stereotypically enigmatic forms of speech. The lengthy argument of D8>B8 continues the *katabasis*

[119] For Sextus, the κοῦραι are τὰς αἰσθήσεις, yet the Heliades are described as τὰς δὲ ὁράσεις, the eyes or the vision, and the wheels of the wagon are the 'round parts of the ears' (δοιοῖς . . . κύκλοις', τουτέστι τοῖς τῶν ὤτων). The κοῦραι of D4=B1.5 and the Ἡλιάδες κοῦραι of D4=B1.9 are one and the same, so either Sextus does not recognise this point, or the maidens represent simultaneously eyesight and the senses in general, whilst the wheels represent hearing. In either case, the correspondence drawn is implausible. For further discussion of Sextus' interpretation, see Tarán (1965) 17–22 and Palmer (2009) 51–3.

[120] For this axiom of literary hermeneutics, see (e.g.) Jakobson (1960) 370–1; Barthes (1974) 1–21, 216–17; Culler (1975) 224–30, (1981) 52–6; and, specifically within the discipline of Classics, Hinds (1998) 17–51 (with reference to intertextuality); Laird (2003) 153. All these studies are in a Structuralist vein, but for a pluralistic approach to literary interpretation that does not accept Structuralist tenets, see Heath (2002) 39–57.

theme, with its Tartarean imagery of binding and punishment (D8.19, 35–6=B8.14, 30–1). The fragment's abundant use of repetition, especially of *ou/oude* and *esti*, creates assonance and alliteration, resembling incantation and magical spells.[121] The fragment also recalls prophecy. The divine speaker refers to the arguments she makes as *semata*, 'signs', a term which is elsewhere used of divine portents and of the linguistic signs of Delphic oracles.[122] D8.10=B8.5 and D8.25=B8.20 adapt the formulaic line used by Homer of the knowledge of the prophet Calchas, and by Hesiod of the song of the Muses:

> ὃς ᾔδη τά τ' ἐόντα τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα
>
> [*sc.* Calchas] who knew the things that are, the things that shall be and the things that came before
>
> (*Il.* 1.70≈Hes. *Theog.* 38)

> οὐδέ ποτ' ἦν οὐδ' ἔσται, ἐπεὶ νῦν ἔστιν ὁμοῦ πᾶν
>
> nor was it nor shall it be, since it is now, together, whole (D8.10=B8.5)

> εἰ γὰρ ἔγεντ', οὐκ ἔστ(ι), οὐδ' εἴ ποτε μέλλει ἔσεσθαι
>
> for if it was born, it is not, nor if it is ever going to be (D8.25=B8.20)

Parmenides' adaptation of the formula illustrates the contrast between the goddess's world view and that of convention. The Homeric line's prophetic wisdom of past, present and future concerns the world of becoming, which, from the goddess's perspective, cannot be the object of authoritative knowledge.

Oracles are enigmatic and typically misunderstood, while incantations and magical spells 'display a propensity verging on obsession to create abnormal words'.[123] The evocation of these speech-genres therefore marks up the way in which the goddess's speech is, like all hexameter poetry, highly defamiliarised from ordinary speech. Indeed, the formalist concept of defamiliarisation is appropriate for the goddess's speech in at least two further respects. It defamiliarises traditional epic language by adapting and altering formulaic lines and, in a sense closer to Shklovsky's original

[121] See Gemelli Marciano (2008) 44–5. Note especially the anaphora at D8.27–9=B8.22–4. For repetition, assonance and alliteration as features of incantations and *voces magicae*, see the evidence gathered by Versnel (2002) 130–5, and also Segal (1974) esp. 146–51. A pertinent parallel is the highly alliterative and assonant Empedocles D43=B111.

[122] LSJ *s.v.* I. For the Delphic oracle, note, famously, Heraclitus D41=B93, on which see Tor (2016) for detailed discussion. Cf. also Hes. *Theog.* 498–500.

[123] Versnel (2002) 141.

definition of the term,[124] it defamiliarises the world, presenting familiar entities differently from how they are usually regarded. Through defamiliarisation in this latter sense, texts prompt the reader (or audience member) to reflect, in a more prolonged manner, on phenomena that have previously been taken for granted. The markedly mysterious and enigmatic qualities of the goddess's speech demand this sort of response, leading an audience to reconsider the meaning of one of the most prosaic and seemingly unremarkable items in the Greek lexicon, *esti*. She even instructs us to interpret her language in a critical and penetrating manner, telling us to 'judge by reason the much-disputed refutation spoken [by her]' (D8.5–6=B7.5–6).[125]

6 Conclusion

Parmenides combines the characteristically deceptive, immersive and symbolic aspects of poetry, three functions that are closely intertwined: we are granted a perspective on a world separate from our immediate experience by means of the poem's self-consciously deceptive mimesis. This process has axiological and emotive dimensions – we see what it is like to view the world from a divine but contemptuous perspective and this appears as a frightening and enthralling experience – but it also invites reflection on the nature of deception, that is, on the ways in which the world of the poem and the world of our sensory experience relate to unchanging reality. They do so (from the goddess's perspective) in an oblique manner, so that, in order to comprehend true reality, we cannot take their details at face value. The poem marks up this quality by recalling characteristically symbolic forms of discourse, such as incantations and oracles and even epic poetry itself. Through interpreting the poem in a symbolic manner, we are to look beyond its deceptions in order to recognise true reality, a procedure that prepares us to apply a similar interpretation to our sensory experience.

[124] See Shklovsky (1990). Although 'estrangement' may be etymologically closer to the original Russian term *ostranenie*, I use 'defamiliarisation' as it has entered the anglophone critical vernacular.

[125] The notion that we are to judge for ourselves, that is, by our own reasoning, the validity of the goddess's account, is stressed e.g. by Curd (2002) 134–5 and Lesher (2008) 473–4. Kingsley (2003) 126–40 emends the dative λόγωι to the genitive λόγου on the grounds that it is too early for the word to have the sense of 'reason' or 'reasoning', but the term comes close to this sense in Heraclitus (esp. D46=B50, see Kahn [1979] 94–5, 97–102, 130–2), and Kingsley's reasoning seems problematically circular: why could Parmenides not be the earliest attested example of this usage? On this issue, see the detailed discussion of Granger (2010) 30–3.

If this interpretation is accepted, some more general conclusions can be drawn concerning Parmenides and Greek poetics. While it is undoubtedly true that performed verse, during a period of incipient literacy, served both as a mnemonic and as a means of reaching a wider public than prose, these practical benefits provide only a limited explanation for the significance and effects of the medium and Parmenides' use of it. Equally limited is the theory that he wrote in verse because this was the culturally sanctioned medium by which to pronounce authoritatively true claims. For he also composed verses in order to provoke certain types of response from his audience. In this respect, Parmenides is a true poet and not a mere versifier. His use of verse is not simply an unthinking conformity to tradition but a self-conscious manipulation of a particular type of discourse.

What is more, through alluding to meta-literary episodes such as Hesiod's *Theogony* proem and the Sirens episode of the *Odyssey*, he engages in an ongoing discussion concerning the nature and function of song. This contribution can be regarded as an important moment in the emergence of the Classical conception of poetry. With the *Doxa*, the goddess distinguishes a section of her account as both verse and as a mortal fabrication to be held up to critical scrutiny. In distinguishing this section, she operates with a conception of both language in general, and poetry in particular, as something that can be isolated and analysed as distinct entities. In fact, in presenting the *Doxa* as a poetic world deriving from mortal opinion, she comes close to Platonic conceptions of literary mimesis. Her stark epistemological distinction between divine knowledge and mortal opinion is a prerequisite to the Platonic idea that poetry is a misleading imitation of reality based on opinion rather than knowledge. These issues will be discussed in greater detail in the Epilogue. First, however, let us turn from Elea to Acragas, and Empedocles' dazzling response to Eleatic anxieties over mortal language.

CHAPTER 3

Empedocles

1 Introduction

Unlike Xenophanes and Parmenides, Empedocles' merits as a poet have been almost unanimously acknowledged in both antiquity and modernity.[1] His dynamic cosmology, in which the myriad phenomena of the perceptible world are formed out of just four elements and governed by the competing forces of Love and Strife, provided ample opportunity for lush description and vivid narrative. Love brings the different elements together until they are eventually blended to form a single cosmic Sphere; Strife causes them to separate from one another until they are four pure cosmic masses. The influence of Love and Strife alternates over a cosmic cycle of many thousands of years. The familiar world we inhabit is at some intermittent period between the time of Love's Sphere and the absolute separation of the elements under Strife. It seems to occur at two points over the course of the cycle: under increasing Love and under increasing Strife.[2] The cosmology is thus a divine drama in which the six permanent entities (Love, Strife, and the four elements), referred to at times by the names of gods, are the protagonists.[3] In addition to this cosmology, certain fragments also present a doctrine of metempyschosis: the souls of the wise

[1] Praise of Empedocles' poetry in antiquity: Arist. fr. 70 Rose=F73 Janko (*ap.* Diog. Laert. 8.57); Cic. *De or.* 1.50.217; Lucr. 1.729–33; Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 683E; in modernity: e.g. KRS 283; Most (1999) 356; Kahn (2003) 158; Warren (2007) 135; Graham (2010) 328.

[2] These basic details of the cosmic cycle are now relatively uncontroversial. For a more detailed overview, see Primavesi (2016), building largely on the important work of O'Brien (1969) (developed further in O'Brien [1995]). The orthodox view that there is a 'double-cosmogony' was disputed in the sixties by Bollack (1965–9) 1 97–124, Hölscher (1965) and Solmsen (1965) (for an overview of this debate, see Long [1993]), but their 'single-cosmogony' view has since been rebutted by Graham (1988) and Trépanier (2003). Sedley (2007) 31–62 proposes a complex (non-symmetrical) alternative which does not seem to have found much support.

[3] On the cosmology as a divine drama, with Empedocles as 'l'Homère de la nature' see Bollack (1965–9) 1 277–310.

become 'prophets, poets, singers and chiefs' (D39=B146). The narrator himself tells the story of how he, a *daimon* or 'spirit', has been exiled from the gods (D10=B115) and reincarnated as 'a boy, a girl, a bush, a bird, a leaping fish from the sea' (D13=B117). The doctrine of metempsychosis is used as a basis for injunctions against animal sacrifice, the consumption of meat (D28=B136) and even eating certain vegetables (D32=B140, D31=B141) since they may contain the souls of our kin (D29=B137).

It will be clear even from this brief summary that Empedocles' vision of the world is an inherently more aesthetic one than that of Parmenides. He grants the status of true reality to phenomena that mortals experience as beautiful and is more accommodating to poetry (as traditionally conceived) than Xenophanes or Parmenides had been, according a high status to poets (D39=B146) and allowing for the validity of Muse-inspiration and of certain mythical tales. Yet despite his value as a poet and his significance for the history of philosophical poetics, Empedocles has been the subject of relatively little scholarship that could be characterised as literary criticism.[4] The vast majority of work has been devoted to textual criticism and to the detailed exegesis of his philosophy, especially the question of how the 'religious' aspects of his thought might cohere with the cosmology, a question that has become more pressing since the publication of the Strasbourg papyrus.[5] This important issue cannot be ignored, but it will not form the main focus of the present chapter, which aims to enhance our appreciation of Empedocles as a poet through an investigation of the responses that the fragments are designed to elicit. The question of the relationship between the two sides to Empedocles' thought (and the related one of whether the surviving fragments come from one or two poems) will be touched upon further in the following section, but it shall be assumed (along with most recent scholarship) that the 'religious' and 'cosmological' aspects form part of the same world view and that all surviving fragments form part of a singular didactic project, even if they come from two poems.

[4] On specific, literary-critical issues, see: van Groningen (1971); Rösler (1983); Sider (1984); Obbink (1993); Wright (1998); Gagné (2006); Most (2007); Palumbo (2007); and Hardie (2013). Note also the larger-scale studies of Rosenfeld-Löffler (2006) (marred by a failure to take sufficient account of the cosmology) and Gheerbrant (2017). The technical linguistic studies of Traglia (1952); Gemelli Marciano (1990); and Willi (2008) 193–263 are also valuable in this regard, as are the commentaries of Bollack (1965–9) (only on the fragments attributed to the *Phusika*) and Wright (1995), though they have been rendered somewhat outdated by the Strasbourg papyrus (of which Bollack [2003], on the *Katharmoi*, fails to take sufficient account).

[5] For a bibliography and concise overview of the history of Empedoclean scholarship, see Primavesi (2013b). For an annotated bibliography on items published on Empedocles up to 1965, see O'Brien (1969) 337–98; for an exhaustive, continuously updated bibliography, see https://sites.google.com/site/empedoclesacragas/bibliography-a-z.

The validity of these assumptions will in part be tested by whether the readings here offered are convincing. Such an approach is circular, but this sort of circularity is inevitable in the interpretation of fragmentary texts.

In what follows, Section 2 addresses important first-order questions, which should be preliminary to any understanding of the function of Empedocles' poetry, concerning the number of poems from which the fragments derive and their performance context. Section 3 assesses the position of poetry within Empedocles' cosmology, in comparison with Xenophanean and Parmenidean poetics. Section 4 then argues that the poem is structured by two particular types of narrative and investigates their significance. Section 5 explores various effects, characteristic of Greek poetry, that these narratives help to generate.

2 Religion and Philosophy, One Poem or Two

As in the case of Parmenides, there has been disagreement over whether to assimilate Empedocles to philosophy or to religion: according to the former approach, he is a cosmologist who dresses his philosophical claims in poetico-religious language in imitation of Parmenides; according to the latter, he is primarily a religious figure, who composed poetry analogous to the verses in the 'Orphic' gold tablets, designed for ritual and incantatory purposes.[6] This debate has been fuelled (again, similarly to the case of Parmenides) by the fact that Empedocles presents two different types of account, two different ways of describing the world, that are distinguishable by criteria that would be used in later distinctions between poetry and philosophy. Thus, some fragments have traditionally been ascribed to the *Katharmoi*, a religious poem describing the cycle of reincarnations of a *daimon*, an exile from the gods who has committed bloodshed, whilst others are thought to come from the *Phusika* or *Peri Phuseōs*, a poem detailing the cosmology in which all things are composed of the four elements and governed by the two forces of Love and Strife. These 'physical' aspects of Empedocles' thought have been seen as more 'philosophical', whilst the religious aspects have been felt to be vestiges of

[6] For the former approach, see e.g. KRS 283; O'Brien (2001) (and, concisely, [2005]); Primavesi (2008a). The latter approach is championed most vociferously by Kingsley (1995), (2002), (2003) 315–559; but note also Dodds (1951) 145–7 and Gemelli Marciano (2001) 205–9, (2005b). A nuanced discussion of the issue is provided by Laks (2013), who ultimately regards Empedocles' use of religious language as a philosophical 'reference' rather than a representation of an actual 'phenomenon'. For studies of the religious background to Empedocles that do not take such an avowedly anti-philosophical stance, see Zuntz (1971) 179–274; Riedweg (1995); Rodriguez (2005); Petrovic and Petrovic (2016) 78–100.

primitive and distinctively non-philosophical religion. It was this distinction that led to Jaeger's memorable description of Empedocles as a 'philosophical centaur'.[7]

Of course, as commentators have pointed out, there is no clear-cut division between 'philosophers' and religious figures at this period; we can read Empedocles productively and on good historical grounds within both contexts: the fragments display the conspicuous influence of both Parmenides and Pythagoreanism.[8] Accordingly, scholarship in more recent decades has tended to treat the two aspects as designed to be construed together.[9] This unifying approach is supported by the recurrence of certain key terms across the different parts of Empedocles' work,[10] and has been corroborated by two major developments in Empedoclean studies: first, Catherine Rowett's cogent, if ultimately conjectural, argument, published in 1987, that the surviving fragments come from a single poem, referred to variously by different titles in different sources;[11] and second, the publication in 1999 of the Strasbourg papyrus, which showed beyond any reasonable doubt that a single poem both outlined the cosmology and recounted, in the first person, experiences of the *daimon*.[12] Although the papyrus has not ruled out the possibility that the fragments come from two poems – one of which *predominately* contained the cosmology, the other, the narrative of the *daimon* and the injunctions against meat-eating – it does at the very least provide strong justification for interpreting the 'daimonology' alongside the cosmology as part of a singular project.

It shall be assumed here, on the strength of arguments provided by Rowett and, more recently, in light of the papyrus, by Simon Trépanier, that the fragments do indeed come from a single poem and, moreover, on the principle of parsimony, that the narrator remains the same across the surviving fragments.[13] My readings should, for the most part, be unaffected by the two-poem hypothesis, so long as it is assumed that two such poems

[7] Jaeger (1939) 1.295; cf. Jaeger (1947) 128–54.
[8] A point made e.g. by Graham (2010) 327.
[9] Thus, e.g. (prior to the publication of the Strasbourg papyrus) Kahn (1960); Barnes (1982) 391–6; Wright (1995) 57–76.
[10] Most conspicuously, the *daimon*'s crime of bloodshed is motivated by *Neikos* (D10=B115.14), 'Strife', which, along with 'Love', *Philia*, is one of the two cosmic forces that govern the movements of the four elements in the cosmology (e.g. D73>B17).
[11] Published as Osborne (1987). Diogenes Laertius' report, which stems from the notoriously unreliable Hellenistic biographer Lobon, that 'his work *On Nature* and the *Katharmoi* (Τὰ μὲν οὖν Περὶ φύσεως αὐτῷ καὶ οἱ Καθαρμοί) stretches to five thousand verses' (8.77), may be either a mistaken amalgamation of the different titles used by different authors or a reference to different parts of the same poem analogous to Hesiod's *Works and Days*. See Trépanier (2004) 27.
[12] Martin and Primavesi (1999).
[13] Osborne (1987) (Rowett's previous name); Trépanier (2004) 1–30.

warrant a unified reading. Even if we do take the fragments to come from two separate poems, the very fact that they are attributed to the same author should be sufficient justification for this approach.[14] Narratorial personae in early Greek poetry are typically consistent across different works attributed to the same author, thus forming the continuous story of a particular character.[15] For Empedocles, similarities of language and theme across the fragments should equally warrant such a unifying reading.

One significant entailment of the single-poem hypothesis is that the same audiences would have received (notwithstanding textual variations) the same text. This runs counter to the view, under the assumption of the two-poem hypothesis, that the daimonological narrative is an 'exoteric' text, addressed to a collective audience and designed to illustrate symbolically the principles of the cosmology which is itself an 'esoteric' text, addressed to Pausanias alone.[16] Indeed, some use the distinction between singular and plural addressee as a criterion for distinguishing the two poems.[17] This criterion, however, is not compelling. Such a variety of singular and plural addressees is paralleled in the comparable didactic poems of Hesiod, Lucretius and Virgil.[18] One fragment even contains a shift of addressee from the Muse to Pausanias (D44=B3), so the existence of multiple addressees alone cannot be taken as secure evidence for multiple poems. More importantly, even if we do suppose two poems, it is highly unlikely that, in any literal sense, one would have been 'esoteric' and the other 'exoteric'. The fragments with a singular addressee formed part of a poem that became known to Plato and Aristotle and, eventually, was translated into Latin.[19] It is improbable that this transmission would have occurred had the poem been designed only for the ears of an esoteric-religious sect. A much more likely context for the circulation of the parts of the poem thought to be 'esoteric' is public, rhapsodic performance, as is

[14] For a defence of reading the literary oeuvre of a particular author as a meaningfully unified whole, see A. Fowler (1982) 128–9.

[15] Note such examples as Archilochus, Hipponax and Solon. See Morrison (2007) 45, 61–7.

[16] Thus, Bollack (2001), (2005) (who, with problematic circularity, sees the occurrence of B139 in the Strasbourg papyrus as a quotation from the religious poem in the physical one – but we have no grounds for supposing that the fragment occurred anywhere else in Empedocles' work than in the part of the *Phusika* preserved in the papyrus); Kingsley (1995) 363–6, (2002) 344–350; Primavesi (2008a).

[17] This criterion was influentially applied by Stein (1852) (whose division of the fragments is followed, more or less, by DK and Wright [1995]), and has more recently been advocated by Cerri (2001) 182–3 and Primavesi (2007) 216–19.

[18] On Empedocles' addressees, see further Obbink (1993).

[19] Assuming the *Empedoclea* of Sallustius, mentioned by Cic. *QFr.* 2.9.3=R36, is a translation. On the Latin reception of Empedocles, see Hardie (1995); Sedley (1998) 1–34; Nelis (2004); Garani (2007); and articles by Farrell, O'Rourke, Fabre-Serris and Nelis in *Dictynna* 11 (2014).

attested for the *Katharmoi*.[20] On the other hand, if the narrative of the *daimon* were intended as an 'exoteric' text, then it would be a very strange one indeed, since it advances beliefs and practices that were associated with Orphism and Pythagoreanism, religious movements that, in Classical sources, are always depicted as peripheral.[21] Even if we do suppose two poems, then, they are likely to have had similar performance contexts. The esoteric feel of some of the fragments and their distinction of a singular chosen addressee are better understood as rhetorical features. After all, the poem was not composed for the ears of Pausanias alone, if indeed he was ever a real person. The peculiarly appropriate etymology of Pausanias' name, 'one who stops pain', for the student of this text (cf. D4=B112.10–11) may betoken his fictional nature.[22] As in the case of Parmenides, the distinction of a singular addressee challenges any potential audience member to step into Pausanias' role.[23]

3 Empedoclean Poetics

Whilst immense efforts have been deployed towards a reconstruction of the details of Empedocles' cosmology, the role of poetry within this system has received little attention.[24] The present section argues that Empedocles' philosophy, in addition to responding to physical claims made by earlier authors, also repositions the role of poets and poetry. Against the criticisms of poets by Xenophanes and Heraclitus and against the negative implications for poetry of Parmenides' arguments, Empedocles' cosmology provides a systematic defence of the source of poetry. This section deals with

[20] Dicaearchus fr. 87 Wehrli (*ap.* Athen. 14, 620d=A12=D3) and Favorinus (*ap.* D.L. 8.63=Empedocles A1) report that the *Katharmoi* was performed at Olympia by the rhapsode Cleomenes. Obbink (1993) 77–8 accepts the validity of the story and dates Cleomenes, on the basis of the dating of the other rhapsodes Athenaeus mentions, to the late fifth or early fourth centuries BCE, citing West (1981) 125.

[21] On this see, concisely, Burkert (1982) and Parker (1995). On the marginality or marginalisation of Pythagoreans and Orphics, cf. Xenophanes D64=B7 (lampooning Pythagoras); Eur. *Hipp.* 952–5 with Barrett (1964) *ad loc.*; Pl. *Resp.* 364b–365a; Thphr. *Char.* 16.12. Edmonds (2013) argues at length that the unifying feature of references to Orphics in ancient sources is precisely that they are out of the ordinary.

[22] The etymology is pointed out by Clay (2015) 132, who has also pointed out a similarly appropriate etymology of Hesiod's Perses as deriving from πέρθω, 'to lay waste', 'to plunder' (Clay [2003] 38).

[23] Contrast the way in which Hesiod's Perses and Lucretius' Memmius are sometimes seen as foolish foils against whom we are to distinguish ourselves (see Clay [1993], [2003] 33–6 on the former; Mitsis [1993] on the latter). Obbink (1993) 52–3, 80–9 argues that Empedocles' Pausanias similarly serves as a foil, a view I shall reject in Section 4b below.

[24] Although see Gagné (2006) and, now, Gheerbrant (2017), esp. 633–705. Hardie (2013) also touches on this matter.

the status and source of poetry within Empedocles' cosmos. Later on, Section 5 will deal with its ideal effects.

a Empedocles and His Predecessors on Poetry

Xenophanes criticised Homer and Hesiod's depictions of anthropomorphic, morally fallible gods and referred to certain mythical creatures – the Titans and the centaurs – as 'fabrications' (*plasmata*). His conception of divine communication ruled out the validity of Muse-inspiration. Sometime later, Heraclitus denied that Hesiod and Xenophanes (along with Pythagoras and Hecataeus) had 'understanding' (*noos*, D20=B40; cf. D25a=B57; D26=B129) and stated that Homer and Archilochus 'deserve to be thrown out of the contests and beaten with a stick' (D21=B42; cf. D22=B56; D24=B105). By the time of Empedocles' composition, then, there were attacks against (1) the status of poets (they deserve to be thrown out of the contests), (2) the content of their poetry (the fabricated, morally corrupting stories) and (3) their claims to divine inspiration. Empedocles denies all three of these criticisms. (1) He elevates the status of *hymnopoloi* – 'singers' or 'minstrels' –[25] along with chieftains (*promoi*) and prophets (*manteis*) as incarnations of the souls of the wise (D39=B146, with Clement's context for the fragment).[26] (2) His cosmology allows for the historical existence of fantastical, mythical beasts. During the onset of Love, individual limbs are initially formed and come together into various combinations, but only the combinations that we would recognise as animals in the present stage are capable of survival.[27] Thus, at an earlier point in the cosmic cycle, there did indeed exist Minotaur-like 'ox-faced men' (as well as 'man-faced oxen', D156=B61). Such a process could also easily have accounted for other composite mythical creatures, such as the Centaurs or the Chimaera. (3) Empedocles assumes the validity of the traditional forms of

[25] The term is, for instance, used of Anacreon at [Simon.] 67 *FGE*. It might be thought that it specifically denotes a singer of 'hymns', but *humnos* does not yet seem to have the specific meaning of a 'song to a god' in Archaic Greek poetry (it is used, for instance, of the song of Demodocus at *Od.* 8.429, and Pindar uses it repeatedly of his own work, e.g. *Ol.* 1.105, 2.1, 3.3 etc.). The term seems sufficiently broad at this stage to encompass more or less all poetry. See Maslov (2015) 286–94 for a recent discussion, although his conclusion, that the term was originally used specifically for choral singing, seems to me to go beyond the implications of the surviving evidence.

[26] Picot and Berg (2015) argue suggestively that the figures of D39=B146 have achieved a high status through engagement with strife, mainly on the grounds that πρόμοι primarily means 'battle-chief' (an abridgement of πρόμαχοι) in Homer, but as Gheerbrant (2017) 701–2 argues, by the time of Greek tragedy, the word can simply mean 'chief of the land' (e.g. Soph. *OC* 884) and here, Empedocles is reinterpreting traditionally prestigious societal roles in terms of his cosmology.

[27] Cf. D154=B57, D149=B59, with Simplicius' context for the two fragments. For the most detailed reconstruction of this process, see O'Brien (1969) 196–236.

divine-to-mortal communication, prophecy and Muse-inspiration. Prophets have achieved a high grade of incarnation (D39=B146), and countless mortals come to the narrator in search of 'prophecies' (D4=B112.9). In the surviving fragments, the narrator addresses the Muse twice, and refers to her a third time (D44=B3; D47=B4; D7=B131).

It is quite possible that Empedocles was responding directly to these earlier critical comments. Chronology permits that he was familiar with Heraclitus' work: he was active no earlier than the second quarter of the fifth century;[28] Heraclitus' book became sufficiently famous to have raised a group of followers, Heracliteans, whom Plato depicts as known to Socrates and his interlocutors in the second half of the century (R16–26). This possibility is further supported if, as some have argued, Parmenides D7=B6 alludes to Heraclitus D49=B51,[29] since Empedocles certainly knew Parmenides' poem. In any case, the connection with Parmenides makes it more than likely that Empedocles was aware of Xenophanes' criticisms of certain poets. The ancient testimonies that Parmenides was a student of Xenophanes and Empedocles an associate of Parmenides may be questionable,[30] but an intellectual genealogy linking the three authors is supported by a common geographical association with Southern Italy and confirmed by internal evidence. Among Empedocles' copious allusions to Parmenides are the descriptions of the Sphere that occurs during the period of Love's supremacy (D90=B28; D92=B29), which indicate that it is modelled on the Sphere-like entity outlined in Parmenides' *Aletheia* (D8.47=B8.42).[31] Parmenides' Sphere-like entity is itself modelled on Xenophanes' singular unmoving god.[32] This intellectual lineage supports a reading of Empedocles' accommodation of poetic inspiration and authority against Xenophanes' criticisms: the contrast may well have been intended by Empedocles and would have been recognisable to some ancient audiences.

[28] Empedocles was born later than Anaxagoras (Arist. *Metaph.* 1.3.984a11=A6; Theophr. *ap.* Simpl. *In Phys*. 25.19=A7) but was apparently Gorgias' teacher (D.L. 8.58<A1), and so probably older than him, details which suggest a birth date between around 500 and 485 BCE. Diogenes Laertius places his *floruit* in 444–441 BCE (8.74=P1<A1), which seems a decade or two too late. See further KRS 280–1 and O'Brien (2005) 318–21.

[29] There is a long-standing debate on this issue, which goes back to Bernays (1850). For a cogent and relatively recent defence of the identification of such an allusion, see Graham (2002).

[30] Theophrastus reported that Parmenides was Xenophanes' student (*ap.* D.L. 9.21=Parmenides P6<A1), a notion that probably ultimately derives from Plato *Sophist* 242D; and that Empedocles was Parmenides' 'emulator and associate' (*ap.* Diog. Laert. 8.55=P13<A1). Note also Hermippus' report that Empedocles spent time with and imitated not Parmenides but Xenophanes (fr. 26 Wehrli *ap.* Diog. Laert. 8.56=P15<A1).

[31] Cf. especially Empedocles D90.1=B28.1 ἀλλ' ὅ γε πάντοθεν ἶσος <ἑοῖ> καὶ πάμπαν ἀπείρων with Parmenides D8.54=B8.49 οἳ γὰρ πάντοθεν ἶσον, ὁμῶς ἐν πείρασι κύρει.

[32] Cf. Parmenides D8.9, 43=B8.4, 38 with Xenophanes D17=B24, D19=B26.

Most conspicuous, however, is the relationship with Parmenides. As has long been acknowledged, Empedocles alludes copiously to Parmenides throughout the fragments.[33] What I propose here is that this engagement has implications for poetics. It was argued in Chapter 2 that Parmenides, in the introduction to the *Doxa*, presents the world of mortal appearance as one of poetic artifice, enlisting the fictional potential of poetry to illustrate the deceptive nature of the world of our mortal experience. Empedocles alludes precisely to that part of Parmenides' poem, rewriting it in a more optimistic manner. In the lengthy outline of the cosmic cycle that was preserved by Simplicius and then augmented by the Strasbourg papyrus, the narrator bids his addressee to 'hear the undeceptive expedition of my account', an expression that reverses the 'deceptive *kosmos* of words' of Parmenides' goddess (D8.57=B8.52). To clarify the poetical significance of this allusion to Parmenides, the line is worth quoting in context (D73.245–66=B17.14–35) and will require a detailed analysis:

ἀλλ' ἄγε μύθων κλῦθι· μάθη γάρ τοι φρένας αὔξει·
ὡς γὰρ καὶ πρὶν ἔειπα πιφαύσκων πείρατα μύθων, (D73.246=B17.15)
δίπλ' ἐρέω· τοτὲ μὲν γὰρ ἓν ηὐξήθη μόνον εἶναι
ἐκ πλεόνων, τοτὲ δ' αὖ διέφυ πλέον' ἐξ ἑνὸς εἶναι,
πῦρ καὶ ὕδωρ καὶ γαῖα καὶ ἠέρος ἄπλετον ὕψος,
Νεῖκός τ' οὐλόμενον δίχα τῶν, ἀτάλαντον ἁπάντηι,
καὶ Φιλότης ἐν τοῖσιν, ἴση μῆκός τε πλάτος τε (D73.251=B17.20)
τὴν σὺ νόωι δέρκευ, μηδ' ὄμμασιν ἧσο τεθηπώς·
ἥτις καὶ θνητοῖσι νομίζεται ἔμφυτος ἄρθροις,
τῆι τε φίλα φρονέουσι καὶ ἄρθμια ἔργα τελοῦσι,
Γηθοσύνην καλέοντες ἐπώνυμον ἠδ' Ἀφροδίτην·
τὴν οὔ τις μετὰ τοῖσιν ἑλισσομένην δεδάηκε (D73.251=B17.20)
θνητὸς ἀνήρ· σὺ δ' ἄκουε λόγου στόλον οὐκ ἀπατηλόν.
ταῦτα γὰρ ἶσά τε πάντα καὶ ἥλικα γένναν ἔασι,
τιμῆς δ' ἄλλης ἄλλο μέδει, πάρα δ' ἦθος ἑκάστωι,
ἐν δὲ μέρει κρατέουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο.
καὶ πρὸς τοῖς οὔτ' ἄρ τι[34] ἐπιγίνεται οὐδ' ἀπολήγει (D73.261=B17.30)
εἴτε γὰρ ἐφθείροντο διαμπερές, οὐκέτ' ἂν ἦσαν·
τοῦτο δ' ἐπαυξήσειε τὸ πᾶν τί κε; καὶ πόθεν ἐλθόν;

[33] The instances are too copious to list here, but the commentary of Wright (1995) notes them *passim*.
[34] Wright (1995) obelises here on metrical grounds, but synecphonesis (running together of two adjacent vowels to form one syllable) of this kind (τι ἐπιγίνεται) is paralleled at D76.5=B139.1 (ὅτι οὐ). See further Gallavotti (1975) 187, 348.

πῆι δέ κε κἠξαπόλοιτο, ἐπεὶ τῶνδ' οὐδὲν ἔρημον;
ἀλλ' αὐτ(ὰ) ἔστιν ταῦτα, δι' ἀλλήλων δὲ θέοντα
γίγνεται ἄλλοτε ἄλλα καὶ ἠνεκὲς αἰὲν ὁμοῖα. (D73.266=B17.35)

But come, listen to my words; for learning will increase your wits;
For just as I said before, showing the limits of my words, (D73.246=B17.15)
I will speak twofold; for at a time one thing grew to be alone
From many, and at another, it grew apart to be many things from one,
Fire and water and earth and the boundless height of air,
And destructive Strife apart from them, balanced in all ways,
And Love among them, equal in length and breadth. (D73.251=B17.20)
See her with your mind and do not sit stunned by your eyes;
She who is also considered to be inborn in mortal limbs,
By whom they think thoughts of love and accomplish fitting deeds,
Calling her Joy by name and Aphrodite;
Her whom no one has known among them (D73.256=B17.25)
No mortal man. But you, listen to the undeceptive expedition of my account.
For these are all equal and the same age in respect of their birth,
But each presides over a different honour, and each one has its character,
And they rule in turn within the cycle of time.
And in addition to these, not a thing is created nor ceases to be; (D73.261=B17.30)
For if they perished forever, they would no longer be.
For what might increase this whole? And coming from where?
And how could it be destroyed, since nothing is devoid of these things?
But these things are themselves, and passing through one another
Different things come to be at different times and continuously always similar.
(D73.266=B17.35)

As commentators have noted, the allusion can be read as a 'correction' of Parmenides' poem.[35] The sort of pluralistic cosmology that was deceptive for Parmenides' goddess is deceptive no longer. The allusion flags a difference between the two epistemologies: for Parmenides, sensory experience led to a world of deception, but Empedocles vindicates the use of the senses as a means of accessing the true nature of the world (D44=B3.9–13).[36] Palmer denies that the line is a challenge to Parmenides on the grounds that the significance of 'not deceptive' is restricted to Love's cosmological activity,[37] but such a restriction is unnecessary: that the 'not deceptive expedition' should refer, in the first instance, to Love's activity does not prevent it from marking

[35] Thus e.g. Wright (1995) 170; Trépanier (2004) 49; O'Brien (2005) 323–4. Contrast Nünlist (2005) 74–5, who sees the polemic against humans in general, rather than Parmenides (but the evocation surely suggests that Parmenides is one of those humans).

[36] This particular contrast is marked by allusions to Parmenides' rejection of the senses as a means of accessing the truth at D8.1–6=B7. See n. 224 below.

[37] Palmer (2009) 273–6.

a more general relationship between Empedocles' cosmology and that of the *Doxa*.

Furthermore, this reading is supported by the manner in which Empedocles combines elements from both the *Doxa* and the *Aletheia*. The commands in line 21 ('See her with your mind and do not sit stunned by your eyes') recall the instruction of Parmenides' goddess to 'see (λεῦσσε) things which though absent are present to the mind (νόωι)' (D10=B4.1), and her description of ignorant mortals as 'stunned' (τεθηπότες, D7=B6.7). The recollection illustrates how Empedocles' cosmological Love is, like the entity in the *Aletheia*, accessible to the mind though not evident to the senses, at least as usually deployed by mortals.[38] The argument against the perishability of the four elements (D73.262; 264=B17.31, 33) and against the possibility of anything being created in addition to them (D73.263=B17.32) is especially reminiscent of the goddess' contentions in Parmenides D8>B8 against the possibility that what-is was created or is perishable (D8.8, 11–17, 24–6=B8.3, 6–12, 19–21), or that anything could be created in addition to it (D8.18=B8.13). The phrasing is similar: like the goddess, Empedocles makes his argument using an unreal conditional clause (cf. D73.262=B17.31 with Parmenides D8.38=B8.33) and impassioned rhetorical questions (cf. D73.263–4=B17.32–3 with Parmenides D8.11, 12, 14–15, 24=B8.6, 7, 9–10, 19). Given these evocations of Parmenides – and specifically the *Aletheia* – the seemingly tautological expression, 'these things are themselves' (αὐτ[ὰ] ἔστιν ταῦτα, D73.265=B17.34) appears as a response to Parmenides' ἔστιν: Empedocles specifies what Parmenides had left notoriously unspecified (the subject of ἔστιν), intimating that the four elements have the 'trustworthiness' that Parmenides ascribed to what-is.[39] From one perspective, they 'always are, unmoving in the cycle' (αἰὲν ἔασιν ἀκίνητοι κατὰ κύκλον, D73.244=B17.13), just as what-is is unmoving (D8.31, 42=B8.26, 37). There has been some debate over whether or not Empedocles' elements are meant as a 'plurality of Parmenidean Beings',[40] but this dichotomy fails to appreciate the subtlety of the engagement: the elements are not simply Parmenidean Beings, but, in certain respects, assume the role that 'Being' or 'what-is' occupied within Parmenides' philosophy, in being the uncreated and indestructible objects of secure knowledge. Accordingly, the account also contains conspicuous resemblances to the *Doxa*, in violation of

[38] On this connection, see further Palmer (2009) 275.

[39] πίστις is specified as a quality of both Parmenides' *Aletheia* (D4=B1.30) and Empedocles' account at D61=B71.1. Note also the similar epistemological vocabulary, reminiscent of Parmenides, used in D44=B3.9–13 and D47=B4.

[40] Palmer (2009) 279–312 vociferously denies that the elements are Parmenidean Beings, against the orthodox view represented by e.g. Guthrie (1965) 146; Curd (2005) 155–64.

the strictures in the *Aletheia.* The elements both 'are' (D73.265=B17.34) and 'come to be' (D73.266=B17.35), since they are ever-present in all compounds, but only 'come to be' manifest as pure stuffs at occasional points in the cycle. 'Coming to be' is a process that, in Parmenides' poem, was confined to the deceptive world of the *Doxa*. The phrasing here, with γίγνεται positioned emphatically at the start of the line, seems designed to underline the co-existence of these two processes against the Parmenidean division. The narrator has just mentioned the creation (γένεσις) and destruction (ἀπόλειψις) of mortal things (D73.235=B17.3) and will proceed to describe how 'we come together into one *kosmos*' (D73.267) as well as, in detail, the perceptible world that had been explained in the *Doxa* (D73.279–308, D74 from the same papyrus).

In sum, Empedocles' allusions here illustrate his defence of the pluralistic world of mortal experience against Parmenides' misgivings. He thus provides grounds for a defence of the validity of the dynamic, colourful world of Greek poetry against the Parmenidean claims that only singular 'what-is' lives up to the standards of true reality, claims which entailed that the world of traditional poetry was a deception. Empedocles here also invites a reading against the wider tradition of 'poetic pessimism' in which Parmenides' introduction to the *Doxa* participated. The mortal Homeric and Hesiodic narrators bore an uncertain relationship with their Muses: in the *Iliad*, we only hear *kleos*, and lack the perfect knowledge of the Muses (*Il.* 2.484–93); in the *Theogony*, it is left unclear whether the Muses inspired Hesiod with 'true things' or 'lies like true things' (*Theog.* 27–8).[41] Xenophanes drew on this passage to highlight the provisional nature of his cosmology, and Parmenides' goddess did so when distinguishing the deceptive and trustworthy parts of her speech. Empedocles presents a further step within this tradition: he adapts the line of Parmenides' poem which itself had been a window-allusion to both Xenophanes D50=B35 and Hesiod's *Theogony*.

The connection with this wider tradition is corroborated by further thematic parallels: the Empedoclean narrator is, like the Hesiodic and Homeric Muses, and like Parmenides' goddess, a deity (D4=B112.4;[42] D60=B23.11) who has knowledge of the truth (D6=B114) in contrast with

[41] On the Muses in Hesiod's *Theogony*, see the scholarship cited at Introduction n. 59 and Chapter 1 n. 43 above.

[42] This problematic line is discussed in greater detail in Section 4a below.

the general ignorance of mortals (D42=B2).[43] The insult to mortals in D42=B2 recalls Hesiod's Muses: the narrator lambasts the ignorance of mortals – they have 'narrow resources' (στεινωποί . . . παλάμαι, D42=B2.1) and 'many vile things . . . blunt their wits' (πολλὰ δὲ δείλα . . . ἀμβλύνουσι μέριμνας, D42=B2.2) – before proceeding to single out the addressee, presumably Pausanias: 'you, since you have come here, shall learn' (σὺ (δ') οὖν, ἐπεὶ ὧδ' ἐλιάσθης / πεύσεαι, D42=B2.8–9). This discursive pattern of an insult to the masses,[44] combined with a singling out of a particular favoured student, also occurs in the *Theogony*, where the Muses insult the farmers in general (κάκ' ἐλέγχεα, γαστέρες οἷον, 'wicked shameful things, mere bellies', 26) before they privilege Hesiod by giving him the laurel staff and inspiring him with wondrous song (30–4).

The thematic parallels (divine knowledge; mortal ignorance; mediation via poetry) and the more specific parallels with Hesiod in D42=B2 support our reading of the narrator's assertion of the *un*deceptiveness of his words not only as an allusion to Parmenides, but as a participation in this long-standing discussion concerning the poet's access to divine truths. Indeed, we are reminded of the contrast between divine narrator and mortal addressee at D73.256–7=B17.25–6, with the statement that no 'mortal man' (an expression emphasised by line position) has known of Love among them and it is because of this ignorance that the narrator must reassure his mortal addressee of the undeceptiveness of his account. Comparison with this tradition reveals that the situation in Empedocles is much less problematic than the earlier examples: Homer, Hesiod, Xenophanes and Parmenides all had emphatically mortal primary narrators, and contrasted divine knowledge with the mortal perspective. Of these forebears Parmenides presents arguably the most optimistic picture, since the youth is assured by the goddess that she will teach him true reality and she clearly distinguishes that content from the deceptive part of his speech, but the youth is nonetheless mortal.[45] Empedocles presents a still more positive scenario: the primary narrator himself appears as a god (D4=B112.4) who assures us of the validity (D6=B114) and undeceptiveness of his claims. Of course, as we shall see below, the divine status of Empedocles' narrator is a difficult crux, but the key point is that, unlike Parmenides' poem,

[43] Although he also invokes the Muse, it is notable that he does so not to make use of any superhuman knowledge she may possess, but to ensure that his speech is pious, a 'good account of the gods' (D7=B131.4) and no more than what is 'right for ephemeral beings to hear' (D44=B3.4).

[44] Arguably a Presocratic *topos*, given the similar scorn expressed by Heraclitus (D1=B1) and Parmenides' goddess (D7=B6).

[45] Notwithstanding the possibility that he achieved a *homoiōsis theōi* through learning the goddess' lessons. See Chapter 2 Section 5b above.

the divine authority does not communicate to the audience via a mortal intermediary.[46]

It might be objected that Empedocles' narrator still invokes the Muse. However, it is notable that he does not obviously do so to learn new information, but to ensure that his speech is pious, a 'good account of the gods' (D7=B131.4) and something that is 'right for ephemeral beings to hear' (D44=B3.4).[47] When Empedocles refers to the 'assurances of my Muse' (D47=B4.2 ἡμετέρης . . . πιστώματα Μούσης) it is likely, given the parallels for the expression, that he is referring metonymically to his song, and not to any external authority.[48] The possessive pronoun is suggestive of the poet's mastery. Other hexameter poets invoke the Muse with an imperative verb of singing or speaking, implying that the Muse herself knows the content to be performed, but Empedocles' Muse is only an accomplice who is asked to 'stand by' him (D7=B131.3).[49] Instead, the knowledge of Empedocles' narrator derives from his recollection of different reincarnations (D6=B114; D13=B117) and coincides with his divine status.[50] He demands that his student 'know these things having heard them from a god' (θεοῦ πάρα μῦθον ἀκούσας, D60=B23.11). Tor has argued that this 'god' is the Muse,[51] but the fact that the line occurs at the end of a lengthy fragment in which no Muse is mentioned, as well as the male gender of θεοῦ, make it more probable that the god is the narrator himself.

If it is true that 'One function of the poet at any time is to discover by his own thought and feeling what seems to him to be the poetry at that time' and that 'ordinarily he will disclose what he finds in his own poetry by way of the poetry itself',[52] Empedocles' 'discoveries' concerning the nature of

[46] Though the narrator himself may be both mortal and divine, from different perspectives, as Tor (2017) 333–5 argues.

[47] *Pace* Tor (2017) 333–5. Palmer (2013) argues that the narrator for most of the *Physica* (including the details of the cosmology) is in fact the Muse, with Empedocles as mortal addressee; fatal for his thesis, however, is that the narrator of the section of the poem preserved in the Strasbourg papyrus (i.e. the most detailed account of the cosmic cycle) laments his crimes of bloodshed (D76), and so is almost certainly to be identified with the exile from the gods who narrates D10=B115.

[48] Cf. Pl. *Symp.* 189b; Callim. frr. 75.77, 112.1 with Harder (2012) *ad loc.*; Theocr. 16.107 plays upon this sense, on which see Hunter (1996) 92–3. For Empedocles' Muse as metonymic of his song, see Hardie (2013) 218–20.

[49] Contrast Homer *Il.* 1.1, 2.484; *Od.*1.1; *hMerc.* 1.; *hHom.* 9.1, 14.2, 17.1, 19.1, 20.1, 31.1, 32.1, 33.1; Hes. *Theog.* 105; *Op.* 2. On the form of early Greek Muse-invocations see Morrison (2007) 73–89. On Empedocles' Muses more generally, see Hardie (2013) and Gheerbrant (2017) 99–213.

[50] The fact that the truth is *painful* for mortals (D6=B114) may suggest that knowledge of the truth comes through experiencing the cycle of reincarnations. See also n. 47 above.

[51] Tor (2017) 335 n. 51. See also n. 47 above.

[52] Stevens (1951) vii. Quoted in the Introduction Section 3 above.

poetry are disclosed by his relationship with earlier poetry. Along with the defence against Parmenides of the trustworthiness of the sensible world, Empedocles' narrator enacts a more positive relationship between the singer and the truth. This contrast is marked by the allusions to Parmenides and by the overall enunciative scenario involving a knowledgeable divine narrator who addresses mortals. Of course, there is no reason to take the narrator himself as typifying the status of singers or poets within Empedocles' cosmos: there is every reason to think that he is an extraordinary case. But his more positive status coheres with the claim that poets are reincarnated souls of the wise (D39=B146) and, unlike Homer or Hesiod, presupposes that it is at least possible for a singer to have an unmediated access to the truth. Furthermore, the defence of the perceptible world permits a greater degree of veracity to the stories of the poets than Xenophanes or Parmenides had allowed: Xenophanes had stressed the fallaciousness of Homeric and Hesiodic depictions of the gods, and Parmenides' ontology dictated that no previous Greek narrative accurately reflected true reality. Within the confines of Empedocles' cosmology, the mythical stories of the earlier Greek poets could still be true. Even certain fantastical stories – in particular, that of the Minotaur, but also other composite monsters – are supported by the cosmology.

b Love and Poetry in Empedocles' Cosmology

The cosmology provides a systematic basis for the defence of poetry in a further respect. Empedocles has often been lauded for developing a system that provides a basis for ethics, with Love responsible for good and Strife for evil.[53] But it has less often been appreciated that these ethical functions extend to the realm of aesthetics. As we shall see, Love is responsible for poetry that is both beautiful and socially beneficial, with Strife the source of the converse. To the extent that Empedocles provides a systematic ethics, he also provides a systematic aesthetics.

Beauty arises in Empedocles' cosmology in D21=B122:

> ἔνθ' ἦσαν Χθονίη τε καὶ Ἠλιόπη ταναῶπις,
> Δῆρίς θ' αἱματόεσσα καὶ Ἁρμονίη θεμερῶπις,
> Καλλιστώ τ' Αἰσχρή τε, Θόωσά τε Δηναίη τε,
> Νημερτής τ' ἐρόεσσα μελάγκαρπός τ' Ἀσάφεια.

[53] E.g. Barnes (1982) 122; O'Brien (2005) 341–2. This tradition goes back to Aristotle (*Metaph.* 1.4.985a4–7).

> The Earthly was there, and the far-sighted Sun-faced,
> And bloody combat and calm-looking Harmony,
> And Beauty and Ugliness and Swift and Slow,[54]
> And Lovely infallibility and dark-fruited Obscurity.

The list is modelled on the Homeric and Hesiodic catalogues of Nereids and probably occurred in Empedocles' 'theogony', presumably an account of the origin of certain superhuman 'gods'.[55] Plutarch tells us that this is a list of good and evil 'fates and spirits' that accompany men throughout life (*De tranq. anim.* 474b). He identifies the second pair as Love (*Philia*) and Strife (*Neikos*, *De Is. et Os.* 370d), and with good reason, since Ἁρμονίη is repeatedly associated with Love and the force of attraction throughout the fragments (D60=B23.4; D89=B27.2; D192=B96.4).[56] But it would be strange for Love and Strife to arise in the course of a theogony when they are supposed to be permanent entities. Possibly, then, these are two deities or spirits that are strongly associated with, or predominately formed of, Love and Strife, in the same way that the Land and the Sea are predominately formed of the elements Earth and Water.[57] Alternatively, these may be names for different aspects of the two entities, just as 'Joy' and 'Aphrodite' are different names for Love at D73.255=B17.24. This possibility would be contiguous with traditional Greek religious practice, whereby different epithets, when attached to a particular divine name, can refer to different forms of the deity, which are sometimes depicted in wildly different ways.[58]

In any case, the pair of D21=B122.2 are clearly strongly associated with the two cosmic forces and the same could be said of the other opposing pairs in this fragment. Infallibility is 'lovely' (ἐρόεσσα), thereby associated with cosmic Love; we can plausibly assume that 'dark-fruited obscurity' is conversely associated with Strife. The positive and negative associations of the two terms cohere with the respectively positive and negative depictions of Love and Strife throughout the fragments.[59] On the same grounds, Love

[54] Δηναίη should properly mean 'long-lasting', but, as Wright (1995) 281 argues, probably here means something like 'slow old age' (cf. its usage as 'aged' at Aesch. *PV* 794).

[55] Porphyry *Abst.* 2.21.

[56] See further Sider (1984).

[57] At D122=B38, the Sun appears to be called a Titan, that is, another quasi-divine character formed of one particular element. Cf. D126=A56. See further Long (2017) 6–7 on these bodies in Empedocles.

[58] E.g. Zeus Meilichios was sometimes depicted as a giant snake, and it is not clear whether 'Zeus Chthonios' referred to Zeus in his capacity as lord of the underworld, or the underworld equivalent to Zeus (i.e. Hades). On this issue, see Parker (2011) 67–70 and Versnel (2011) 60–87. The question of whether such various labels referred to the same god may not usually have arisen in popular religion, but it is directly addressed in some literary and philosophical texts (Hdt. 1.44; Xen. *Symp.* 8.9; Cic. *Nat. D.* 3.21–4).

[59] Love is 'Joy' D73.255=B17.24 and worshipped in the ideal community of D25=B128; Strife is 'grievous' (D207=B109.3); 'mad' (D10=B115.14); 'destructive', (D73.250=B17.19); 'wrath'

may be associated with 'Swiftness' and Beauty; Strife, with ugliness and Slowness. Love's association with Swiftness is supported by the 'swift thoughts' (φροντίσι . . . θοῇισιν) of the 'holy mind' of D93=B134, since the mind (given the similarities with D92=B29) seems to be another product of Love. The 'Earthly' and the 'far-sighted Sun-faced' less obviously fit with this scheme, but this pairing has normative value if we regard it as an opposition between the Chthonic and the Heavenly. χθόνιος is most often used in reference to deities of the netherworld (see LSJ *s.v.*), whilst the Sun is said by Empedocles to 'shine back towards Olympus with a fearless face' (D123=B44). Recently, Simon Trépanier has argued that the gods who stand at the highest point in the cycle of reincarnations (D39=B146; D40=B147) are in fact the stars, with the Sun acting as the 'hearth' around which they are gathered (D40=B147.1; cf. Philolaus D15=B7).[60] If, then, we take Love to be the cause (whether material or efficient, in Aristotelian terms) of the positive spirits in this fragment, then beauty is given cosmological explanation as resulting from Love.

That this is beauty as applicable to poetry is clear from the reference to the Muse as Kalliopeia (D7=B131):

> εἰ γὰρ ἐφημερίων ἕνεκέν τινος, ἄμβροτε Μοῦσα,
> ἡμετέρας μελέτας <ἄδε τοι> διὰ φροντίδος ἐλθεῖν,
> εὐχομένωι νῦν αὖτε παρίστασο, Καλλιόπεια,
> ἀμφὶ θεῶν μακάρων ἀγαθὸν λόγον ἐμφαίνοντι.
>
> If, for the sake of one of the ephemerals, immortal Muse,
> It pleased you that my concerns should come through your thoughts,
> Now, again, stand by me as I pray, Kalliopeia,
> Revealing a good account about the blessed gods.

'One of the ephemerals' may be Pausanias, or it may be the narrator himself, perhaps in some earlier, mortal guise, if the first two lines refer to previous assistance, as we would expect in a kletic prayer.[61] In either case, the scenario here presented contrasts with other hexameter invocations to the Muse, in that she is presented not as the source of the message or as

(D77A=B21.7 cf. D101=B22.9). As Kamtekar (2009) 225 points out, Strife's one 'blameless' act is to move out to the furthest limits of the circle (D75=B35.9). Cf. Arist. *Metaph.* 1.4.985a4–7.

[60] Trépanier (2017) 176–7.

[61] Cf. esp. Sappho fr. 1.5–24; also *Il.* 5.116; Pind. *Isthm.* 6.42; Soph. *OT.* 165. Tor (2017) 334–5 assumes that this fragment marks the narrator as an ephemeral creature, but it need not refer to his current incarnation. Gheerbrant (2017) 193–5 rightly stresses how, even if this indefinite figure is the narrator, the expression hints at the ephemerality of the mortal audience. I find less persuasive his argument that the absence of a first-person personal pronoun in the extant text constitutes a marked 'effacement' of the primary narrator (199–201, 211).

singing herself, but as the accomplice to the narrator, who himself 'reveals' the account of the gods.[62] This detail, when taken with the name Kalliopeia, suggests that she will be responsible for the beauty of the verse rather than its content. The name Kalliopeia, as Alex Hardie has recently argued, differs conspicuously from its Hesiodic spelling of Καλλιόπη (*Theog.* 79), and so may be etymologised as καλὰ ἔπεα, 'beautiful words' or 'verses', a reading supported by Empedocles' fondness for such paretymologies.[63] If our analysis of D21=B122 is correct and Love is indeed the cause of Kallisto, we can infer that Kalliopeia, 'fineness in words', also arises as a consequence of Love.[64] The description of the Muse in D44=B3 (line 3) as a 'much-wooed, white-armed maiden' further suggests an erotic quality.[65] A Love-based Muse would be an appropriate accomplice for the revelation of a 'good account about the blessed gods' if those gods are the four elements: Love brings the four elements together harmoniously in the cosmos just as she does in the poem.[66]

c Love's Craft and Empedocles' Poetry

Love's responsibility for poetry is an aspect of her role as divine craftswoman. There are some indications that the crafting of the poem itself is in imitation of Love's divine craftsmanship. As Sedley notes, she is presented as a carpenter, 'fitting' things together with 'glue' (D192=B96) and 'dowels' (D214=B87).[67] At D75=B35.17, during the description of the onset of Love, the narrator exclaims that the process is 'a wonder to behold' (θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι), a formulaic expression that bespeaks the aesthetic quality of Love's activity, and which in Homer is only ever used of the products of handicraft.[68] The poem itself is presented as the product of woodwork in D77A=B21:

[62] See n. 49 above.
[63] Hardie (2013) 215–16; similarly, Gheerbrant (2017) 206. On Empedocles' paretymologies, see especially Willi (2008) 224–7 and 243–7.
[64] Gheerbrant (2017) 205–9 reaches the same conclusion, though on the different grounds that Kalliopeia reprises the harmonising role of Calliope in Hesiod's *Theogony* (87). An association between Empedocles' Muse and Philia is also supported by Hippolytus' testimony (*Haer.* 7.31.3<R88).
[65] On the erotic connotations of these epithets, see further Gheerbrant (2017) 115–20.
[66] On the harmonising function of Empedocles' Muse, see further Hardie (2013) 227–32.
[67] Sedley (2007) 52.
[68] A point made by Ritoók (1989) 344, who argues that 'magic' is never mentioned in the context of early products of handicrafts. It is notable, however, that the expression is often used of particularly special objects or the products of divine craftsmanship, e.g. the wheels of Hera's chariot, *Il.* 5.725; Rhesus' golden armour (*Il.* 10.439); Achilles' first set of armour (*Il.* 18.83); Hephaestus' robots (*Il.* 18.377); the cloak woven by the nymphs (*Od.* 13.108).

ἀλλ᾽ ἄγε, τόνδ᾽ ὀάρων προτέρων ἐπιμάρτυρα δέρκευ,
εἴ τι καὶ ἐν προτέροισι λιπόξυλον ἔπλετο μορφῇι,
ἠέλιον μὲν λευκὸν ὁρᾶν καὶ θερμὸν ἁπάντηι,
ἄμβροτα δ᾽ ὅσσ᾽ εἴδει τε καὶ ἀργέτι δεύεται αὐγῇι,
ὄμβρον δ᾽ ἐν πᾶσι δνοφόεντά τε ῥιγαλέον τε·
ἐκ δ᾽ αἴης προρέουσι θελεμνά τε καὶ στερεωπά.
ἐν δὲ Κότωι διάμορφα καὶ ἄνδιχα πάντα πέλονται,
σὺν δ᾽ ἔβη ἐν Φιλότητι καὶ ἀλλήλοισι ποθεῖται.
ἐκ τούτων γὰρ πάνθ᾽ ὅσα τ᾽ ἦν ὅσα τ᾽ ἔστι καὶ ἔσται,
δένδρεά τ᾽ ἐβλάστησε καὶ ἀνέρες ἠδὲ γυναῖκες,
θῆρές τ᾽ οἰωνοί τε καὶ ὑδατοθρέμμονες ἰχθῦς,
καί τε θεοὶ δολιχαίωνες τιμῆισι φέριστοι.
αὐτὰ γὰρ ἔστιν ταῦτα, δι᾽ ἀλλήλων δὲ θέοντα
γίγνεται ἀλλοιωπά· τόσον διὰ κρῆσις ἀμείβει.

But come, look at this, the witness of my earlier words,
And see if anything in my earlier words was lacking-wood in form,
First, the sun, white to look at and hot in every dimension,
Then the immortal things which are drenched in its form and its bright gleam,
Then the storm, in everything, dark and chill;
And then from the Earth flow forth things rooted and solid.
And in Anger all things are of different forms and split up,
But they come together in Love and have desire for one another.
For from these things all the things that were and are and shall be,
The trees shot up and men and women,
And beasts and birds and water-nourished fish,
And the long-lived gods, highest in honours,
For these things are themselves, but going through one another,
There come to be different shapes, so much does the mixture exchange them.

The adjective 'lacking-wood' (λιπόξυλος) only occurs in Empedocles and seems to be a metaphor with the sense of 'incomplete', a sense that is supported by the fact that the ensuing passage, which appears to be a recap of the cosmology that has just been covered,[69] is exhaustive in scope, encompassing everything from the celestial bodies, to plants, animals, humans and gods, to 'as many things as were, are, and shall be'. It is as if the poem were a wooden model of the entire history of the cosmos fashioned by the poet, himself a master-carpenter, like Love.

The complete poem, then, one that does not 'lack wood', is crafted on the model of Love's crafting of the perceptible cosmos. This connection

[69] For the placement of this fragment, see Trépanier (2004) 34–5, who draws on Simplicius' introduction to it at *in Phys.* 1.159.10, which makes clear that it follows B17, a fragment for which, thanks to a stichometric line in the Strasbourg papyrus, we now have line numbers.

between Love and the text that is not 'lacking-wood' is supported by the word's other occurrence, in D61=B71:

εἰ δέ τί σοι περὶ τῶνδε λιπόξυλος ἔπλετο πίστις,
πῶς ὕδατος γαίης τε καὶ αἰθέρος ἠελίου τε
κιρναμένων εἴδη τε γενοίατο χροΐά τε θνητῶν
τόσσ', ὅσα νῦν γεγάασι συναρμοσθέντ' Ἀφροδίτηι

And if your conviction is at all lacking-wood concerning these things,
How, when water and earth and air and the sun
Are mixed together, the forms and colours of mortal things come to be
As many as have now come to be, joined together by Aphrodite

Here, the wood imagery is applied to the student's belief, as if Pausanias must form his own wooden model on the basis of the text. Again, this process is associated, this time more explicitly, with Love's agency in creating the objects of the perceptible universe, the things that have been 'joined together by Love', an expression that further develops Love's role as carpenter.[70]

Her craftsmanship extends specifically to artistic production in the well-known painters simile, of D60=B23:

ὡς δ' ὁπόταν γραφέες ἀναθήματα ποικίλλωσιν
ἀνέρες ἀμφὶ τέχνης ὑπὸ μήτιος εὖ δεδαῶτε,
οἵτ' ἐπεὶ οὖν μάρψωσι πολύχροα φάρμακα χερσίν,
ἁρμονίηι μείξαντε τὰ μὲν πλέω, ἄλλα δ' ἐλάσσω,
ἐκ τῶν εἴδεα πᾶσιν ἀλίγκια πορσύνουσι,
δένδρεά τε κτίζοντε καὶ ἀνέρας ἠδὲ γυναῖκας
θῆράς τ' οἰωνούς τε καὶ ὑδατοθρέμμονας ἰχθῦς
καί τε θεοὺς δολιχαίωνας τιμῆισι φερίστους·
οὕτω μή σ' ἀπάτη φρένα καινύτω ἄλλοθεν εἶναι
θνητῶν, ὅσσα γε δῆλα γεγάκασιν ἄσπετα, πηγήν,
ἀλλὰ τορῶς ταῦτ' ἴσθι, θεοῦ πάρα μῦθον ἀκούσας.

And just as whenever painters decorate offerings,
Two men expert in skill, because of their wit,
So when these men take hold of many-coloured paints in their hands,
In harmony mixing some more, others less,
From them they make forms like all things,
Creating trees and men and women
And beasts and birds and water-nourished fish
And long-lived gods, best in honours;
In this way do not let deception overcome your mind that from elsewhere

[70] For ἁρμόζω and its cognates in the context of carpentry, cf. *Od.* 5.162, 247; Eur. *Cyc.* 460.

Is the source of mortal things, all of the limitless things that have come to be manifest,
But know these things clearly, having heard the speech from a god.

Although the dual form of the participles (δεδαῶτε, μείξαντε) may hint at the fact that both Love and Strife have a role in the production of the sensible cosmos out of the four elements,[71] the detail that they are mixing 'in harmony' (ἁρμονίηι), a term associated with Love (D60=B23.4; D89=B27.2; D192=B96.4), stresses Love's role in particular. The fragment could be seen as an example of ecphrasis (in the modern sense), like the Homeric shield of Achilles or the Hesiodic *Scutum*:[72] it describes the visual content of works of art. The painters elaborately depict all the different phenomena of the world. Generally, ecphrasis is seen to invite comparison between the work of art described and the literary text in which the description is embedded. Fowler and Elsner, for instance, have stressed, in general, the uneasiness of the relationship between the ecphrastic description and the overall narrative, and how precisely this uneasiness opens possibilities for interpretation.[73] In this instance, however, it is the similarities between the embedded content and the wider cosmological narrative that are strongly emphasised: the content of the paintings is identical to that of Empedocles' text. Lines 6–8 also occur, with only minor variations, at D77a=B21.10–12 (quoted above) where, as we saw, Empedocles' poem was presented as a product of woodwork, in the manner of Love's carpentry of the perceptible cosmos. That the painters' work here is analogous to Empedocles' work of poetry is further implied by the visual language which Empedocles repeatedly uses of his verbal account (D44=B3.9; D77A=B21.1; D257=B110.2; D74.326=B76.3; D73.292–3, 300). In fact, the fragment seems emblematic of Empedocles' poetics: the painters ποικίλλωσιν, 'decorate' offerings, a verbal cognate of the noun *poikilia* which would become a technical term among the scholiasts and other literary critics for 'variation' in poetry.[74] This sort of 'variation' seems especially apt for the variety of phenomena that Empedocles describes, in detail, in the physical fragments.

Since Love plays a role in the painters' work, we are entitled to infer that she is also instrumental in the creation of Empedocles' poetry. The finer details of this process are obscure. It is not clear precisely how divine inspiration in

[71] A point made by Sedley (2007) 59.
[72] On the ancient use of the term, as a detailed description of any kind (not just of works of art), see Webb (2009).
[73] D. Fowler (1991); Elsner (2002) 3–9.
[74] On the term in Homeric scholia, see Nünlist (2009) 198–202. Porter (2016) 419 identifies a poetics of *poikilia* in Empedocles.

Empedocles' cosmology works or, more specifically, how Love interacts with the poet to produce poetry.[75] Possibly, this is a modification of the traditional model of 'double-' or 'over-determination', whereby the same action can be attributed both to a mortal agent and to the god who inspired it:[76] in this instance, the same action (the performance of the poem) is simultaneously attributable to a *theos* (the narrator) and to the cosmic principle (Love). That we should infer some sort of process along these lines is implied by the language he uses, and by the principles of his cosmology.

There are, however, two important and related objections to the notion that Love is responsible for beauty. First, at least according to most scholars, Empedocles' perceptible cosmos arises as a result of both Love and Strife, so that Strife must also play a role in the creation of the myriad phenomena that exhibit this *poikilia* and might usually be taken as beautiful.[77] Second, the function of Love is ultimately to unify all entities into the cosmic Sphere, an item that could hardly be described as 'beautiful' in any conventional sense and which conspicuously lacks the *poikilia* of Empedocles' poetry.

In response to the first objection it could be maintained that, even though the presence of Strife is required for the myriad phenomena, Love's agency is always stressed in the creation of the different objects we perceive, perhaps since she works against the natural inclination of like portions of elements to separate from mixtures and merge with like.[78] Thus, at D77A=B21.14, it is 'mixture' (κρῆσις), the characteristic activity of

[75] The key study of Delatte (1934) 21–7 sees Empedoclean Muse-inspiration as an example of 'enthusiasm' (*enthousiasme*), of 'creative madness' (*délire créateur*) which is 'the manifestation of the god who lives in us' (*la manifestation du dieu qui habite en nous*). Delatte relied largely on the late testimony of Aurelianus *De mysteriis* 5.15=A98; but as Murray (1981) showed, the notion of Muse-inspiration as divine madness is not attested before Plato.

[76] On which the classic treatment is Dodds (1951) 1–18. See also more recently (with some modifications of Dodds' view, whilst still allowing for this basic principle of overdetermination that seems inconsistent to modern readers) Versnel (2011) 163–79. The most explicit examples of the feature occur at *Il.* 16.849, 19.86–96 and *Od.* 22.347–8.

[77] See n. 2 above. Gheerbrant (2017) 643–705 arrives at this conclusion (concisely stated at 704).

[78] For the principle that Empedoclean elements are intrinsically attracted to like elements but are attracted towards unlike ones by the influence of Love, see O'Brien (1969) esp. 301–13, whose view has been taken up more recently by Primavesi (2016). On the view above, Love is the agent of creative acts and works against the increasing tide of Strife when, say, she forms individual limbs but can no longer bring them together into complete animals due to Strife's influence. Sedley (2007) 48–9 objects to this view on the grounds that it faces 'the task of explaining what could possibly motivate Love to continue with zoogony in the age of growing Strife, during which . . . the species generated during her earlier ascendancy continue to exist', but this objection is not compelling: Love, for Empedocles, seems always to want to bring things together (even when she has already formed some animals, and even when, under increasing Strife, the organs she forms have no chance of coming together into complete organisms), just as Aphrodite will always want to bring together lovers and needs no further motivation.

Love, rather than separation, that causes the variety of forms to appear. Even though these objects could not exist at the point of maximum Love, Love is, for Empedocles, responsible for their creation and operates in spite of the force of Strife which works to disintegrate them.

The second objection is more challenging. Indeed, the desirability of the divine Sphere poses a rhetorical challenge for Empedocles since it involves the obliteration of everything that we know and care about. That the Sphere is desirable is implied by the positive account of Love in the cosmos and by the fact that the Sphere 'rejoices in its surrounding solitude' (D89.3=D90.2=B28.2).[79] The fragments do not furnish a clear answer to the question of why we should want the formation of the Sphere, but one can be provided on the basis of the distinction between divine and mortal perspectives: the beauty of the phenomenal world is beautiful from a mortal perspective, but once we relinquish such a perspective, we realise that the Sphere itself is the most beautiful object in the history of the cosmos. If this interpretation is along the right lines, then the poem acts as a 'a ladder which must be thrown away when one has climbed it':[80] we are to identify the Love underlying the instances of beauty in the current cosmos and thus be led to the realisation that the Sphere itself is the most desirable state of affairs. This scheme may lie behind the command to 'see [Love] with your mind, and do not sit stunned by your eyes': rather than being dazed by the *poikilia* of the sensible world, we are to contemplate the beneficial force of cosmic Love. Such an understanding of the function of Empedocles' text, tentative though it is, would be consistent with the sort of subtextual interpretation that he, at times invites us to apply (see further Section 5d below). At any rate, the responsibility of Love for beauty is strongly implied by the repeatedly positive descriptions of her and her work, and by the origins of Kallisto in Empedocles' theogony: these considerations should weigh in favour of reading Empedocles' beauty as a manifestation of the influence of Love, as opposed to that of Strife.

d Conclusion to Section 3

Empedocles has long been seen to defend the variegated perceptible world against Parmenides, whilst accepting his principles that nothing can be created

[79] See n. 59 above.
[80] As Owen (1960) 100 understands Parmenides' argument, borrowing an analogy from Wittgenstein (*Tractatus Logico-Physicus* 6.54) and Sext. Emp. *Math*. 8.481.

ex nihilo or destroyed *in nihil*.[81] In addition to this metaphysical response to Parmenides, the cosmology can also be seen to encompass an aesthetic one: poetry which depicts the wondrous variety of sensible phenomena need not be 'deceptive' (cf. D60=B23.9; D73.257); beauty in poetry derives from the same source as harmony and moral rectitude in the perceptible world, that is, cosmic Love. Empedocles' theology is sometimes regarded as more systematic than pre-philosophical, poetic conceptions of the gods, on the grounds that his cosmic forces, whilst still being divine agents, follow regular, predictable patterns of behaviour.[82] This systematic theology encompasses a systematic conception of beauty and specifically the beauty of poetry.

If the above reconstruction is accepted, then Empedocles' poem represents a significant moment in the development of the Classical conception of poetry. For some scholars, the idea of poetry as a mortally crafted product, attributable to a particular creator-poet and explicable in terms of regular natural processes, arises only later in the fifth century at the hands of prose authors who were readers of poetry rather than performers or composers. In support of this view, some have observed that Homer never refers to the poet's activity in terms of 'skill or 'craft',[83] and argued that, when epinician poets use such imagery in the early to mid-fifth century, they do so in order to assert the superiority of poetry over plastic arts as a means of bestowing *kleos* on the *laudandus*.[84] Later, Aristophanes and Plato used such imagery poetologically, in pejorative contexts, once poetry had begun to be thought of in terms of written texts as well as performances.[85] This scholarly narrative can be modified in light of Empedocles' poetics. He stands out as a poet who, probably in the first half of the fifth century, presented his work as a product of craftsmanship. Although the rise of the written text undoubtedly facilitated increasing adherence to the artisanal conception of poetry, that conception, in

[81] On Empedocles' cosmology as a response to Parmenides in this way, see e.g. Graham (1999); Laks (2004); Curd (2005) 155–71; O'Brien (2005) 323–4. Contrast Palmer (2009) 260–317, whose views are discussed in Section 3a above.

[82] Contrast the arbitrariness of the behaviour of Homeric and Hesiodic gods. On this sort of regularity as a distinctive achievement of the Presocratics, see e.g. Long (1999) 13–14. On Presocratic 'theology' as being more rational than that of Homer or Hesiod, see Trépanier (2010); cf. also Broadie (1999), for whom what distinguishes certain Presocratics (including Empedocles) from Homer or Hesiod as theologians is that they question, and investigate, what constitutes godhood.

[83] Svenbro (1984) 156–79; Finkelberg (1998) 101–5; Ford (2002) 113–14.

[84] Thus Ford (2002) 113–30, endorsing the verdict of Bowra (1964) 4. Contrast Maehler (1963) 25. Grethlein (2008) argues for a similar interpretation of the references to visual arts in Homer.

[85] E.g. Ar. *Thesm.* 52–7, where the slave describes the poet Agathon's creative process. As Austin and Olson (2004) *ad loc.* comment, 'the overall effect . . . is to present Agathon not as a divinely inspired poet . . . but as a mere wordsmith'; Pl. *Phdr.* 278d–e, where, as Yunis (2011) *ad loc.* comments, the metaphor describes 'the non-philosophical writer's protracted, excessively fussy manner of composition'. On these passages, see Ford (2002) 156.

his work, is tied to the notion of a divine creator of the phenomenal world and its contents: Empedocles' poetry imitates the activity of Love in creating a cosmos of sorts. On the other hand, he retains the older conception of poetry as the product of divine inspiration, albeit in a systematised form. Moreover, the narrator's utterance, in the address to the Acragantines in D4=B112, as we shall see, is presented in a specific social context, to the end of instituting new cult practices. Poetry, then, at least on the evidence of his own poetic practice, is not conceived by Empedocles as the self-contained, autotelic *objet d'art* of (some) modern criticism and, to some degree, presaged by Aristotle's *Poetics*.[86] But in presenting his poetry as an object of craftmanship and as analogous to painting in its representation of the world, Empedocles can be seen as a liminal figure, with one foot in the earlier tradition of Muse-inspired Archaic song and the other in the world of finely crafted Classical poetry.

4 Empedocles' Narratives

A more detailed investigation of the function of Empedocles' poetry will require a consideration of its wider architecture. It shall be argued here that two narratives in particular underpin the text and would have conditioned a contemporary audience's response to it. Glenn Most has argued that narrative is a feature that early Greek poetry bequeathed to early Greek philosophy: the divine drama of Empedocles' cosmology thus takes the form of a dynamic narrative like the lays of Homer and Hesiod.[87] But it would be fair to say that the account of the cosmology is less conventionally a narrative than the story of the *daimon*'s exile. The latter conforms to the familiar plot-type of exile and return, detailing the actions of an anthropomorphic agent and the consequences of those actions. In Aristotelian terms, the daimonology is a *muthos*, a 'plot-structure',[88] but the cosmology is not. When Aristotle denies the title of poet to Empedocles on grounds of *mimesis*, it is clear that he is thinking of the cosmology rather than the daimonology (*Poet.* 1.1447a–b): the

[86] For the conception of literature as autotelic, note Maslov (2015) 9–10, who claims that this notion was 'made possible by the autonomization of the aesthetic realm in the second half of the nineteenth century'. This may be true with respect to the specific term 'autotelic' (first attested, according to the *OED*, in 1864), but the idea that literature is an end in itself is usually traced to eighteenth-century Romanticism (e.g. Eagleton (2008) 15–19). It is for this reason that Goethe rules out the possibility that poetry can be didactic in *Über das Lehrgedicht*. For the idea that Aristotle sees literature as having autonomous value, note e.g. Finkelberg (1998) 10–18; Ford (2015) 18–20.

[87] Most (1999) 348–9.

[88] For this translation of Aristotle's use of *muthos*, see Else (1957) 242–4; Halliwell (1998) 5, 12, 141–2 *et passim*; Gudeman (1934) 76–7 sees it as synonymous with *pragmata*, 'actions' or 'deeds'.

story of the *daimon* on its own would have fulfilled Aristotle's criteria for poetry since its subject matter consists of the actions of a particular character (cf. *Poet.* 1.1448a, 'those who engage in *mimesis* portray [*mimountai*] people in action [*prattontas*]').[89] The first-person narrative of the *daimon*, then, is a narrative in a manner in which the cosmology is not. In addition, we can also distinguish, in Don Fowler's term, 'a didactic plot' in the story of the narrator's education of the internal addressee, Pausanias, another story involving 'people in action'.[90] This process, as commentators have pointed out and as we shall explore in greater detail, conforms to the model of mystic initiation. These two narratives – the first-person narrative of the *daimon* and the initiation of the student – will be the central concern of this section. I shall here consider the two narratives separately and in turn but shall argue that they are interrelated and complementary in important respects.

a The Narrative of the Daimon

D4=B112 appears to be the opening of the work, and introduces the narrator as an arrival at the city of Acragas:[91]

ὦ φίλοι, οἳ μέγα ἄστυ κατὰ ξανθοῦ Ἀκράγαντος
ναίετ' ἀν' ἄκρα πόλεος, ἀγαθῶν μελεδήμονες ἔργων,
ξείνων αἰδοῖοι λιμένες, κακότητος ἄπειροι,
χαίρετ'· ἐγὼ δ' ὑμῖν θεὸς ἄμβροτος, οὐκέτι θνητός
πωλεῦμαι μετὰ πᾶσι τετιμένος, ὥσπερ ἔοικα,
ταινίαις τε περίστεπτος στέφεσίν τε θαλείοις.
τοῖσιν ἅμ' εὖτ' ἂν ἵκωμαι ἐς ἄστεα τηλεθάοντα,
ἀνδράσιν ἠδὲ γυναιξί, σεβίζομαι· οἱ δ' ἅμ' ἕπονται
μυρίοι ἐξερέοντες, ὅπηι πρὸς κέρδος ἀταρπός,
οἱ μὲν μαντοσυνέων κεχρημένοι, οἱ δ' ἐπὶ νούσων
παντοίων ἐπύθοντο κλυεῖν εὐηκέα βάξιν,
δηρὸν δὴ χαλεπῆισι πεπαρμένοι <ἀμφ' ὀδύνηισιν>.

[89] A point made by Gudeman (1934) 91 (writing at a time when there was a consensus that the fragments came from two separate poems concerning separate topics). On *mimesis* and action, see e.g. Halliwell (1998) 128, (2002) 177–9. On Aristotle's literary reception of Empedocles, see Bremer (1980) and Palumbo (2007) (both of whom focus on Empedocles' use of poetic language, rather than plot).

[90] D. Fowler (2000).

[91] Diogenes Laertius describes Empedocles as 'starting the *Katharmoi*' with the fragment (Diog. Laert. 8.62 ἐναρχόμενος τῶν Καθαρμῶν φησιν). On the order of the surviving fragments that can be placed in the first book, see Trépanier (2004) 32–72. For a possible reconstruction of the opening lines of the work, incorporating both D4=B112 and D10=B115, see Rashed (2008).

O friends, who, in the great city of yellow Acragas
Dwell in the citadel, concerned with good deeds,
Respectful harbours for visitors, inexperienced in ill,
Greetings: I come to you as an immortal god, no longer mortal
Honoured among all people, just as I appear,
Crowned with ribbons and with fresh garlands.
Whenever I arrive with them in flourishing cities,
I am honoured by men and women; and they follow me
In thousands, asking me where the path is to gain,
Some in need of prophecies, others, for diseases
Of all kinds, seeking to hear a healing utterance,
Pierced for a long time by difficult pains.

We should not assume that this fragment reflects a real historical scenario, with Empedocles, now a celebrated sage, addressing the citizens of his home town.[92] The use of a fictional narrator would be paralleled in other Archaic didactic texts, most famously the Hesiodic *Precepts of Cheiron*.[93] In this instance, the testimony that the poem was performed at Olympia by the rhapsode Cleomenes assumes a performance outside of Acragas by a performer who is unlikely to have believed that he was a god. This testimony should caution against the assumption that the narrator is to be identified with the author, since the connection would be severed in re-performance.[94] Dirk Obbink has argued that the reference to Acragas is a *sphragis* indicating that the narrator is Empedocles,[95] but if we assume the narrator to be identical to that of D10=B115 (as Obbink does), then it seems

[92] Palmer (2009) 260–1, for instance, treats this as evidence for 'how Empedocles saw himself'; Guthrie (1965) 132–4 similarly uses this as evidence for Empedocles' personality, followed by Lloyd (1987) 100–1 (who cites the biographical anecdotes at Diog. Laert. 8.73 which themselves probably derive from this passage); most extensively, Bidez (1894) 105–76 is a biography of Empedocles that takes the first-person statements in the fragments at face value.

[93] Kurke (1990) 104–7 catalogues evidence for a genre, traceable to the fifth century, of *hypothekai* poems with mythological narrators. In addition to the *Precepts of Cheiron*, she identifies collections of advice spoken by Amphiaraos (to Amphilochus) Apollo (to Admetus), Nereus, Rhadamanthys, Pittheus, and Sisyphus. An older Nestor-poem may have stood behind Hippias' composition of a '*Logos* of Nestor to Neoptolemus' (Pl. *Hp. Ma.* 286A5-B4; Philostr. *V. S.* 1.11.4). The best-attested of these poems (aside from the *Precepts of Cheiron*) is the *Admetou Logos*, advice given by Apollo to Admetus (Bacchyl. 3.76–83; Praxilla 3=*Carm. Conv.* 14 *PMG*; Cratinus fr. 254 *PCG*; Aristophanes fr. 444 *PCG*; Zenobius 1.18).

[94] On the connection between author and narrator in Archaic Greek poetry, see Morrison (2007) 57–67, who argues that although, in most cases, the identity of the primary narrator seems grounded in that of the author, in some examples this is clearly not the case (cf. female speakers in Alcaeus fr. 10, Anacreon *PMG* 385 and Theognis 257–60; Charon in Archilochus fr. 19; the self-deprecating, debauched persona of Hipponax's narrator). The extreme nature of Empedocles' narrator (a god) supports the notion that his narrator is another such example.

[95] Obbink (1993) 78.

significant that he is *not* from Acragas; rather, he is at home in the community of the gods from which he has been exiled.

Whatever the actual original performance context, it is significant that, within the fictional world of the poem, the narrator is situated within a specific real-world *polis*. The greeting (χαίρετ[ε], line 4) suggests that he has just arrived, a detail further supported by the fact that he has been wandering around various cities (lines 5–7). This scenario contrasts notably with the Homeric epics – where the narrator's location is nowhere mentioned – and with Parmenides' poem, where the narrator is a generic *kouros* who speaks from an unspecified location. The specific setting of the narrative within Acragas, then, highlights the relevance of the narrator's speech to a particular, contemporary political community.

The characterisation of the narrator concords with this political theme. The description of his appearance (lines 5–6) – which would remain constant regardless of what the performer was wearing –[96] and of the honour he receives marks him out, in modern sociological terms, as a charismatic, someone distinguished from the ordinary run of mortals, who commands authority through personality rather than by law or tradition.[97] A pertinent parallel is Pythagoras, the leader of an untraditional religious movement who is reported to have worn the unusual clothing of a white robe with trousers and a golden wreath.[98] In Richard Martin's phrase, the narrator is a 'performer of wisdom', an itinerant sage who demonstrates his sagacity by public enactments, including but not limited to the artistic performance of poetry.[99] He has a reputation for expertise in the areas of moneymaking, prophecy and medicine, presumably because he has performed relevant feats in a public context before. It may be ironic that some people come seeking κέρδος, material 'gain' or 'profit':[100] the fragments hardly offer help with moneymaking, but we discover that the 'gain' to be achieved is really a spiritual one, through purification of our souls and the reward of

[96] It is of course possible that a rhapsodic performer would be garishly dressed (as suggested by Pl. *Ion* 530b), but this does not always seem to have been the case (note performer depicted on *ARV*[2] 183.15, 1632 wearing a simple *himation* – I see no reason for the scepticism of Herington [1985] 10–15 over this figure's identity as a rhapsodic performer). Whatever the actual performer happens to be wearing, the fictional narrator is dressed in this elaborate manner.

[97] The term stems from Weber (1947) 358–63. The sociologist Eileen Barker has argued that new religious movements frequently have charismatic leaders. See Barker (2015). On this sort of figure in Archaic Greece as a prototype for the figure of the philosopher, see Gernet (1981) 352–64.

[98] Ael. *VH* 12.32. For Pythagoras as a Weberian charismatic, see Riedweg (2008) 1–41.

[99] Martin (1993).

[100] See LSJ *s.v.* Cf. e.g. Pind. *Pyth.* 3.54 (used of Asclepius' acceptance of gold to bring the deceased back to life); Soph. *Ant.* 222 (Creon sees profit as the motivation for burying Polyneices).

a superior reincarnation. The parallel with the dialogue of Solon and Croesus supports this possibility (Hdt. 1.30–3). Also comparable is the story that Thales, in order to prove how easy it is to acquire wealth, rented several oil-mills on foreseeing that it would be a good season for olives (Arist. *Pol.* 1.11.1259a6). The point of the story is the showiness of the activity: Thales did not do this for the intrinsic benefits of wealth, but in order to demonstrate a particular point to an audience.

Similar tales of practical or political wisdom, often with high-status onlookers, are repeatedly told of the seven sages.[101] Thales, in addition to his reputation as a speculative philosopher, was also reputed to have performed the more practical feat of enabling Croesus to cross the river Halys, without the aid of a bridge (by diverting it upstream), so that he could attack the Medes (Hdt. 1.75). Solon is perhaps most famous for his Athenian political achievements. Indeed, one well-known story, recorded in Plutarch (*Sol.* 1–3) and Diogenes Laertius (1.46), bears a particular resemblance to Empedocles' narrator: in order to convince the Athenians to renew the war with Megara over Salamis, Solon feigned madness and then leapt into the *agora*, wearing either a traveller's cap (*pilidion*, in Plutarch's version) or a garland (according to Diogenes), and when a large crowd assembled, performed his poem on Salamis.[102] Empedocles' narrator similarly arrives at a public part of the city and performs poetry to an amassed crowd whilst wearing distinctive clothing, garlanded, as Solon was if Diogenes is to be believed. Whilst such anecdotes about the sages are rarely credible, they evince a cultural stereotype to which Empedocles presents his narrator as conforming. The addressees of D4=B112 seem similarly high-status. In occupying the acropolis, they are presumably the elites of the city, perhaps the chieftains who are incarnations of the souls of the wise (D39=B146).[103] In depicting his narrator as a sage in this manner, Empedocles implies that he will be able to dispense practical or political advice.

Indeed, Empedocles himself would be credited with similar political achievements to those of Solon: according to Timaeus, he put an end to an 'oligarchy of the 1,000' which had existed for three years (*FGrH* 566 F 2=Diog. Laert. 8.66) and then refused the offer of kingship (*basileia*; *FGrH* 765 F 33; Arist. fr. 865 Rose), as a result of which he put an end to

[101] As Martin (1993) 115–16 points out.

[102] On the significance of the *pilidion* and this story in general, see Irwin (2005) 134–53, who cites ancient depictions of Odysseus wearing the same cap (e.g. *Il.* 10.265 with the scholiasts *ad loc.*) and suggests that the detail paints Solon as a cunning but transgressive trickster.

[103] Stehle (2005) argues that these addresses are the gods of the citadel, but if that is the case, the reference is an oblique one. As I shall argue below, the praise heaped on the Acragantines is better explained as a *captatio benevolentiae* to ensure the success of the narrator's supplication as a polluted exile in need of refuge.

civic *stasis* (*FGrH* 84 F 28).[104] Solon was similarly said to have refused the tyranny of Athens (frr. 32–4 W; Plut. *Solon* 14–15). Whether or not we believe these accounts of Empedocles' career, they support a political reading of D4=B112: if the biographical stories were invented, then they most likely derive, like other ancient lives of poets, from the poetry itself.[105] Even if they were not invented, the characterisation of the narrator unquestionably contributed to Empedocles' reputation in later antiquity, and so D4=B112 could have facilitated the spread of these particular stories. Ancient lives of poets are a form of literary criticism,[106] and, in this case, they support a reading of the Empedoclean narrator as a *polis*-helping sage who fosters civic harmony and vanquishes internal strife (cf. D91=B27a).

The most notorious feature of this fragment, however, is the narrator's claim to be 'to you an immortal god no longer mortal'. This is a further feature that conforms to the type of the charismatic sage: Pythagoras is, again, a relevant parallel since he was said to have been an incarnation of Apollo (Arist. fr. 191 Rose; Iambl. *VP* 30). But commentators are divided as to whether we should take Empedocles' expression as an actual claim to godhood or merely as an indication of the narrator's status from the perspective of his addressees. This issue depends largely on whether we take ὑμῖν as an 'ethic' dative, intensifying the expression (as it were, 'I am a god, you see'; cf. Hdt. 5.30) or a 'limiting' one ('I am a god *to you*', but not necessarily a god *simpliciter*).[107] The latter interpretation is supported by the possibility that the rest of the sentence qualifies that he is only a god in appearance (ὥσπερ ἔοικα, 'just as I appear'), but ancient readers certainly tended to treat this simply as a claim to be a god, and their interpretation is supported by D60=B23.11 ('But know these things clearly, having heard the speech from a god').[108] As Alex Long points out, in a parallel instance (*Od.* 22.348), ὥσπερ ἔοικα indicates what the speaker deserves, not how he is perceived.[109] To have such a divine narrator in a didactic text of this period is also paralleled in the *Admetou Logos*, a collection of sayings that Apollo supposedly delivered to Admetus.[110] It

[104] One the history of Acragas, see Fischer-Hansen, Nielsen, and Ampolo (2004) 186–9, who treat these stories of Empedocles as accurate. On the ancient sources for the life of Empedocles, see Bidez (1894) 1–104.

[105] That ancient lives of poets are extrapolated from the works themselves has been shown by Lefkowitz (2013) and Kivilo (2010). For the application of the same principle to Empedocles, especially the stories about his death, see Chitwood (1986).

[106] For this principle, see Introduction n. 2 above.

[107] Most commentators (e.g. Zuntz [1971] 189–90; *KRS* 313–14; Wright [1995] 266; Trépanier [2004] 80–2; Long [2017] 12) assume the former interpretation, but van der Ben (1975), 23–4; Rösler (1983) 172–5; Graham (2010) 404–5, 430; and Palmer (2013) 311 adopt the latter.

[108] A point made by Willi (2008) 193. On D60=B23.11, see Section 3a above.

[109] Long (2017) 12.

[110] See n. 93 above.

seems preferable, then, to take this as a claim actually to be a *theos*, but the description of his appearance and reputation may already lead us to question in precisely what respect he is a god (just because of his reputation and appearance, or because of his abilities?). This question prepares us for the later revelation that a *theos* for Empedocles is rather different from a *theos* as conventionally understood.[111] But in any case, the expression is designed to be striking, even shockingly hubristic, perhaps calling to mind the mythical Salmoneus who was punished for imitating Zeus.[112] It is, then, a further feature that distinguishes the narrator as an extraordinary charismatic.

When viewed within the context of other Archaic Greek charismatics and performers of wisdom, the self-characterisation of the narrator, as well as the detail of his arrival at a particular *polis*, intimate that he will offer political advice and may bring about political reform. But this success story has been regarded by some as incompatible with the other major source for the narrator's biography, D10=B115:

ἔστιν Ἀνάγκης χρῆμα, θεῶν ψήφισμα παλαιόν,
ἀίδιον, πλατέεσσι κατεσφρηγισμένον ὅρκοις·
εὖτέ τις ἀμπλακίῃσι φόνωι[113] φίλα γυῖα μιήνηι,
< > ὅς κ(ε) ἐπίορκον ἁμαρτήσας ἐπομόσσηι,
δαίμονες οἵτε μακραίωνος λελάχασι βίοιο, 5
τρὶς μιν μυρίας ὥρας ἀπὸ μακάρων ἀλάλησθαι,
φυομένους παντοῖα διὰ χρόνου εἴδεα θνητῶν
ἀργαλέας βιότοιο μεταλλάσσοντα κελεύθους.
αἰθέριον μὲν γάρ σφε μένος πόντονδε διώκει,
πόντος δ' ἐς χθονὸς οὖδας ἀπέπτυσε, γαῖα δ' ἐς αὐγὰς 10
ἠελίου φαέθοντος, ὁ δ' αἰθέρος ἔμβαλε δίναις·
ἄλλος δ' ἐξ ἄλλου δέχεται, στυγέουσι δὲ πάντες.
τῶν καὶ ἐγὼ νῦν εἰμι, φυγὰς θεόθεν καὶ ἀλήτης,
νείκεϊ μαινομένωι πίσυνος.

There is an oracle of Necessity, an ancient decree of the gods,
Eternal, sealed with broad oaths;

[111] Thus Trépanier (2004) 73–82. On Empedocles' different senses of *theos*, see Rangos (2012).

[112] Salmoneus, who was struck by a thunderbolt and consigned to Tartarus for imitating Zeus, a story covered in the *Catalogue of Women* (frr. 15, 30 M.-W.) and most famously told by Virgil at *Aen.* 6. 585–94. See Gantz (1993) 171–3.

[113] Wright (1995) 272–3; Gagné (2006) 83–7; Picot (2007); and Rashed (2008) 10 here all prefer the reading φόβωι, with the sense 'in exile' or 'because of fear', as found unanimously in the manuscripts of Plutarch *De exilio* (which quotes the line). However, I follow most editions (including DK and LM) in accepting Stephanus' emendation to φόνωι (found in his 1572 edition of Plutarch). Primavesi (2001) 35–7 and Gheerbrant (2017) 657–66 argue in favour of the emendation, in support of which is the fact that pollution through bloodshed is the narrator's main concern at B139=D73, D28=B136 and D29=B137, whilst lack of bloodshed marks the realm of the blessed at D25=B128.8.

Whenever someone in error pollutes his dear limbs with bloodshed
< . . . > whoever has committed a fault by breaking an oath,
The *daimones* who have been allotted a long life,
He must wander for thirty thousand seasons away from the blessed ones
Being born during this time in all kinds of forms of mortals
Changing the painful paths of life
For the force of the upper air drives him to the sea,
And the sea spits him out onto the ground of the land, and the earth into the rays
Of the shining sun, who throws him into the eddies of the upper air;
And one receives him from another, but they all hate him.
And I am now one of them, an exile from the gods and a wanderer,
Relying on mad Strife.

The narrator's claim, at D4=B112.4 'to be an immortal god no longer mortal' seems to jar with the statement, at D10=B115.13, that he is 'now exile from the gods and a wanderer'. Consequently, some have thought D10=B115 to come from an earlier poem than D4=B112, in which the narrator was still an exile, before he regained his godhood.[114] If that is indeed the case, then it should be noted that the two poems form two parts of a single narrative of the fall and then resurgence of a particular *daimon*. This sort of narrative development across an author's two poems would be paralleled in Hesiod's correction of the *Theogony*'s account of Strife (*Theog.* 225) in the *Works and Days* (*Op.* 11–12).[115] But we need not suppose that D4=B112 and D10=B115 come from two distinct poems.[116] As Trépanier has argued, the apparent inconsistency could serve a rhetorical purpose.[117] He draws upon Mansfeld's observation that Presocratic texts often begin with strikingly obscure openings which are only elucidated later on in the text, thus affording an 'insight by hindsight'.[118] The two fragments can be read as conforming to this pattern. The narrator's claims to godhood in D4=B112 are shocking, but we later learn, in D10=B115, that the narrator is in fact a *daimon* who is exiled from the real gods, in some respects conforming to popular conceptions of gods, but no longer at the level of the highest status of being that can be achieved. In retrospect, we can see that the narrator

[114] Kahn (1960) 29; Sedley (1998) 9–10; Long (2017) 16. [115] On which see Most (1993a) esp. 77.
[116] Rashed (2008) offers a plausible, if ultimately highly speculative, reconstruction of the first thirty-three lines of the *Katharmoi* that incorporates both D4=B112 and D10=B115, proving that the fragments can be taken together in a manner that makes sense. It seems most likely that D10=B115 came from a poem entitled the *Katharmoi*, since Hippolytus mentions the *Katharmoi* shortly after quoting from the fragment (*Haer.* 7.29.14–25; 7.30.3–4).
[117] Trépanier (2004) 73–107. [118] Mansfeld (1995).

claims to be a god, not merely because of his dress and honours, but in a stronger sense: he is what they take to be a god, an anthropomorphic being with superhuman powers, who will outlive mortals. The expression 'just as I appear' (ὥσπερ ἔοικα) hints at this typically Presocratic gap between appearance and reality.

Against this rhetorical reading it might still be objected that the celebratory tenor of D4=B112 is incompatible with the lamentations of D10=B115. The exile seems distinct from the sage: as Silvia Montiglio has argued, the narrator of D4=B112 is like the triumphant Oedipus at the start of the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, whereas the speaker of D10=B115 is more like the exiled Orestes.[119] These two fragments, however, are in fact more compatible than her contrast implies, and when taken together, conform to a plot-type more widely attested in Greek myth and legend of the blood-polluted exile who arrives at a new *polis* and plays an important, beneficial, role in its history.[120] As Petrovic and Petrovic argue, D4=B112 can be read, in light of D10=B115, as an exile's supplication on arriving at a new destination. The expression 'respectful harbours for strangers' suggests that the location is a sanctuary for suppliant exiles such as the narrator, just as the Areopagus acts as a sanctuary for the polluted Orestes.[121] The praise of the Acragantines (D4=B112.2–3) serves as a *captatio benevolentiae* to ensure that the narrator's supplication is granted. But we can go further than this. The status of an exiled *arriviste* not only presents the narrator as a suppliant, but also imbues him with a special authority. As Richard Martin has shown, the story of the outsider or *metanastes* who moves to a new community and is able to speak with an insight not found among the insiders was a narrative *topos*.[122] Perhaps

[119] Montiglio (2005) 100–5.

[120] I use 'myth' here to refer to stories which are unlikely to be true and 'legend' to refer to stories which could be true, but for my present purposes the difference is inconsequential: these stories, whether they were true or not, were cultural narratives and evince patterns of thought. Cf. Dougherty (1993) 3–11 on such narratives concerning the foundation of Greek colonies.

[121] Petrovic and Petrovic (2016) 82–5. Note LSJ s.v. λιμήν II 'haven, retreat, refuge'. Cf. Aesch. *Supp.* 471, where king Pelasgus, in a state of aporia as to whether to receive the suppliant Danaids, claims that he has 'nowhere a refuge from ills' (κοὐδαμοῦ λιμὴν κακῶν), an expression that is clearly designed to recall the situation of the Danaids themselves. Aeschylus' Danaid trilogy (on which see Garvie [1968] 163–233) presents a further example of a myth that involved the arrival of strangers, murder, the purification of blood guilt and the institution of a new political order. Purification only occurs explicitly in the version of the myth told by Apollod. *Bibl.* 2.1.5, where Athena and Hermes purify the sisters of the murder at the command of Zeus, but as Garvie notes (p. 213), the mass murder would pollute the city as a whole (cf. *Suppl.* 455ff.), which itself would then require purification. See also Gould (1973) 85–90 and Cairns (1993) 113–9, 183–5, 189–93, 221–7 and 276–87 for the role of the *aidōs/adoios* in supplication scenes.

[122] Martin (1992). In addition to the examples above, note also the legendary Scythian wise man Anacharsis, who travelled to Greece and learned Greek ways (Hdt. 4.76ff.), as well as Thucydides,

the best-known example is the Iliadic Phoenix who, like Empedocles, has been exiled as a consequence of *neikos* (*Il.* 9.448) and is then able to speak effectively to the otherwise intransigent Achilles (*Il.* 9.434–603). Patroclus also fits the model: he has had to leave his native country because he has killed another boy (*Il.* 23.85–90) and is then given refuge by Pelias. When he speaks, he makes more of an impression on Achilles than anyone else (esp. *Il.* 16.21–45). More similar to Empedocles is the Odyssean Theoclymenus, a prophet (*mantis*), who has had to flee Argos for killing one of his kinsmen (*Od.* 15.222–78). He is granted refuge by Telemachus at Pylos and, when they return to Ithaca, correctly interprets omens that Odysseus is already on the island (*Od.* 17.152–61) and that the suitors will all be slaughtered (*Od.* 20.351–70). Oedipus himself was an exile at Thebes who had been polluted through bloodshed. Martin's article argues that the Hesiodic persona in the *Works and Days* is also a *metanastes*, but the pattern is much more applicable to Empedocles.[123]

The figure of the authoritative *arriviste* evoked in D4=B112, then, seems closely associated in the Greek imagination with the polluted exile. I want to suggest that one particular type of this figure is relevant here: the murderous oikist, the founder of a new colony who has had to leave his native land due to blood-pollution. Thus, in the *Iliad* (2.661–70), Tlepolemus fled Argos after murdering his uncle to colonise the island of Rhodes, a story that also occurs in Pindar's *Olympian* 7 (20–33, 77–80).[124] Similar stories are told, for instance, of Archias' foundation of Syracuse after being exiled from Corinth for killing the boy Actaeon (Plut. *Mor.* 772e–773b); of Orestes' foundation, when in exile, of a city called Argos Oresticum (Strabo 7.7.8); and of Perseus' foundation of Mycenae after accidentally killing his grandfather Acrisius at Argos (3 *FGrH* fr. 12; Paus. 2.15.4, 2.16.2–3; Apollod. 2.4.4).[125]

whose exiled status enables him to acquire a broader perspective on events (5.26.5). Cf. also the authority of 'wandering poets', discussed at Chapter 1 Section 3a above.

[123] Hesiod's outsider status is hardly emphasised in the poems, with only a brief mention of his father's travels in the *Works and Days* (635–40). Martin (1992) 19, 31 n. 31 strengthens his case by arguing that second-generation immigrants were perceived as being immigrants as much as their parents and by referring to biographies that stress Hesiod's immigrant status. By contrast, the distinction between the Empedoclean narrator and his addressees is clearly stressed, both in the fragments traditionally assigned to the *Katharmoi* (D4=B112) and in those assigned to the *Phusika* (e.g. D42=B2).

[124] The story first occurs at *Il.* 2.661–70 and is also told by Pindar when celebrating a victory for Diagoras of Rhodes (*Ol.* 7.20–33, 77–80). In Pindar's version, Tlepolemus, like Empedocles, is honoured 'like a god' (ὥσπερ θεῷ) by the citizens of Rhodes.

[125] On this topic, see esp. Dougherty (1993) 31–44; note also Parker (1983) 392: 'The list of [mythical characters] who, but for the need to transfer them from one mythological homeland to another (or

Carol Dougherty argues that the reason for the preponderance of such stories concerning oikists is in the connection between blood-pollution and purification:

> Rituals of purification . . . provide the Greeks with a conceptual model with which to describe colonization in terms of the expulsion of part of its population, its galvanization of individuals into a unified group, and its creative role in founding a new city. A city's need to colonize appears to be very much like its need to be purified.[126]

This role of purification in the galvanisation of new unified groups is not restricted to the foundation-myths of colonies but is also evident in certain stories concerning watershed moments in the histories of particular *poleis*. Oedipus, in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* arrives a polluted murderer at the Athenian hill, his supplication is granted and his death establishes a hero-cult that will protect Athens from Sparta (1518–39).[127] A further pertinent example is Epimenides, who, like Empedocles, was credited with composing a *Katharmoi*.[128] In Epimenides' case, the title is clearly connected to his reported achievement in purifying Athens, in the early sixth century BCE, after the Alcmaeonid massacre of the supporters of Cylon.[129] Gagné writes of the role of this story in Athenian cultural memory, that 'his purification is portrayed as a watershed separating then and now'; and that, in Plutarch's account, 'The reform of Epimenides . . . is not presented as a mere reaction to the *agos*, but nothing less than a step in the creation of Athens.'[130] Commentators have sometimes noted the parallels between the Epimenides story and Aeschylus' *Eumenides*.[131] In both cases, an earlier

other aetiological reasons), need never have killed is a long one . . . The motif of the killer who, perhaps after consulting Delphi, founded a foreign colony, was a natural development.'

[126] Dougherty (1993) 37, applying the framework of Douglas (1966). Parker (1983) 375–92 lists killers in Greek myth who are exiled and purified.

[127] Note also that Oedipus' speech at 84–110 in address to the Eumenides shares a number of elements with Empedocles D4=B112 (arrival; plural address to residents of a holy place; appeal to *xenia*; praise of the city). Cf. also 469–70 with D44=B3.1–2.

[128] Strabo 10.4.14 claims Epimenides wrote a *Katharmoi* in verse, while *Suda s.v.* Epimenides claims it was in prose. See Obbink (1993) 56–7 n. 15. Much later, Pythagoras is also presented as having composed a poem of that title (*Carmen aureum* 67f.). Musaeus (schol. *ap.* Ar. *Ran.* 1033=2A6 DK, Plato *Resp.* 2.364e) and Orpheus (Plato *Resp.* 2.364e) are also credited with coming up with 'purifications' (*katharmoi*), but in their cases it is not clear that the word refers to the title of a particular work.

[129] Hdt. 5.71 tells the story of the massacre; Epimenides' purification is mentioned by Plato, *Leg.* 1.642d and Aristotle, *Athenaion politeia* 1.1, and told in detail by Plutarch (*Sol.* 12–14). An alternative tradition held that Epimenides' purification was of a plague (Diog. Laert. 1.110; Max. Tyr. 38.3 Trapp cites both stories). On the role of this episode, and Epimenides, in later Athenian cultural memory, see Gagné (2013) 312–20.

[130] Gagné (2013) 319, 315. [131] Samons (1999); Federico (2001); Gagné (2013) 320.

blood crime causes pollution and conflict across generations until it is purified through the institution of new cults. The story of Epimenides' purification of the Alcmaeonid massacre seems only to have arisen in the fourth century BCE, perhaps as part of Athens' renegotiation of its past in the wake of the defeats by the Spartans and Macedonians,[132] but the *Eumenides* attests to the existence of this particular pattern as early as 458 BCE, around the time of Empedocles' *floruit*. Purification of bloodshed, then, at this stage, can act as a conceptual model with which to describe watershed moments in the history of a *polis*, not just the foundation of new colonies. This may, at least partly, explain the authority accorded to murderous suppliants in Martin's metanastic *topos*.

The story of Empedocles' narrator evokes this type: he is an exile who is out to purify his bloodshed (D10=B115), through the institution of new cult practices and the creation of a new type of community out of the city of Acragas. Indeed, Primavesi has argued that the narrator's story is modelled on a further myth which in some respects conforms to this pattern: Apollo was exiled to the mortal plane for killing the Cyclopes and forced to serve Admetus for a year in penance, a story already attested in the *Catalogue of Women* (Hes. fr. 54b–c; cf. Eur. *Alc.* 1–7, 3 *FGrH* fr. 35a).[133] The narrator, like Apollo, is a god in exile, but it would be reductive to claim that this is the only myth that his story evokes. The scenario of D4=B112 and the injunctions against blood-sacrifice (D28=B136; D29=B137) – injunctions which demand, effectively, a change in fundamentally communal institutions –[134] warrant comparison with the versions of this *topos* that are more obviously embedded in histories of particular *poleis*. This more specific context is suggested by the title of *Katharmoi*: that this generic title is used of both Empedocles and Epimenides' poetry suggests that later readers saw the two authors as performing analogous functions.

[132] Thus Gagné (2013) 320–1, who sees the story as influenced by Aeschylus.

[133] Primavesi (2008a) argues that this myth is the model for the exile of Empedocles' narrator, partly on the basis of Ammonius' identification of the god of D93=B134 with Apollo. Whilst I accept that this myth – and the broader type it represents – is certainly relevant, there is no particularly good reason to think, with Primavesi, that the exiled narrator is identical to the god of D93=B134 or was referred to in the poem as Apollo. There was also a tradition that Apollo's exile was for killing the Delphic dragon (404 *FGrH* fr. 5) and that after the killing he went to Tempe or Crete for purification (Paus. 2.7.7). Cf. Dougherty (1993) 31–44, who sees Apollo's role in purification as the reason for his association with the foundation of colonies (cf. Callim. *Hymn to Apollo* 55–7).

[134] On the role of animal sacrifice as a means of forming bonds in groups, partly through communal feasting, see Burkert (1983) 35–48; Detienne (1989); Parker (2011) 305–9; Bakker (2013) 36–52 (who points out the relative rarity of meat consumption in the ancient world, a phenomenon that usually only occurred at festivals and other special occasions). This explanation, indebted to Durkheim's sociological account of religion (1912), is supported by such primary evidence such as Isoc. 19.10; Dem. 19.128, 190, 58.40; Aeschin. 3.52; Din. 2.9.

Empedocles' poem, I suggest, is designed to effect a similar watershed to that with which Epimenides was credited: the poem offers instructions for purifying a pollution that affects the community but, in the process, also presents the possibility of the creation of a new community, based on new principles.

This point finds further support in the fact that D25=B128 provides the model of an ideal community to which we should aspire:

οὐδέ τις ἦν κείνοισιν Ἄρης θεὸς οὐδὲ Κυδοιμός
οὐδὲ Ζεὺς βασιλεὺς οὐδὲ Κρόνος οὐδὲ Ποσειδῶν,
ἀλλὰ Κύπρις βασίλεια.< >
τὴν οἵ γ' εὐσεβέεσσιν ἀγάλμασιν ἱλάσκοντο
γραπτοῖς τε ζώιοισι μύροισί τε δαιδαλεόδμοις
σμύρνης τ' ἀκρήτου θυσίαις λιβάνου τε θυώδους,
ξανθῶν τε σπονδὰς μελίτων ῥίπτοντες ἐς οὖδας·
ταύρων δ' ἀκρήτοισι φόνοις οὐ δεύετο βωμός,
ἀλλὰ μύσος τοῦτ' ἔσκεν ἐν ἀνθρώποισι μέγιστον,
θυμὸν ἀπορραίσαντας ἐ<ν>έδμεναι ἠέα γυῖα.

Nor was Ares a god for them, nor was Uproar
Nor was Zeus a king nor Kronos nor Poseidon,
But Kypros was queen < . . . >
Her they appeased with pious images
And with painted animals and with elaborate-smelling perfume
And with sacrifices of unmixed myrrh and of fragrant incense,
And casting libations of yellow honey onto the floor.
And the altar was not wetted with the unmixed blood of bulls,
But this was the greatest defilement among men,
To rip out the soul and eat the noble limbs.

Here, the contrast between the idealised community and that of a fifth-century Greek *polis* is marked by the paradoxical expression, '*sacrifices* of unmixed myrrh and of fragrant incense'[135] and by the delayed negative of line 8, where we learn that the altar was *not* wetted with the unmixed blood of bulls. What is normal for the Acragantines – sacrificial slaughter – is in fact the greatest source of defilement (9–10). This detail inverts what seems to have been the central act in the purification for homicide: the cleansing of the killer's hands with the blood of sacrificial victims.[136] Although the scenario is set in the past and may reflect the community from which the *daimon* has been exiled, its idealised quality – its lack of Ares or 'Uproar', and the lush opulence of the offerings to Kypris – entices us to hope that it

[135] Θυσία normally refers to burnt offerings or blood sacrifices (LSJ *s.v.*).
[136] Heraclitus D15=B5; Eur. *IT* 1224, 1338; Aesch. *Eum.* 281; Ap. Rh. 4.685–717. See Parker (1983) 370–4.

can again be realised. Comparable is Hesiod's myth of the races, where the plenteous land of the earlier golden race (*Op.* 109–20) can be recovered by the community that adheres to Justice (cf. *Op.* 225–36).[137] The narrator, like Orestes, is a polluted incomer whose arrival is associated with the institution of new cult practices, but those practices themselves are radically different from traditional Greek ritual, requiring, not purification of blood with (sacrificial) blood, but purification through the abstinence from bloodshed.

Although the reference to the Acragantines in D4=B112 establishes a context within one particular *polis*, D25=B128 offers a model that is more generally applicable. The stories of Orestes and Epimenides were told as watershed moments in the history of Athens, but Empedocles has geographically wider aspirations. His narrator, like these legendary figures, is an exile associated with purification who is to play a role in galvanising individuals into a unified group, but that group is not restricted to a particular *polis*, nor to the Greek world, nor even to the human species. Rather, various details suggest that the poem is designed to induce a sense of community with all other living things, by virtue of the fact that they are composed of the same elements as humans and are species into which we may be (and may have been) incarnated (cf. D13=B117). As part of this wider perspective, the narrator has not been exiled from a particular *polis* but from the gods. It is not exactly clear whether this divine community only exists at some prior time in the cosmic cycle or whether it still exists in some location geographically remote from humans,[138] but in either case, the limits of the traditional mythical pattern, involving exile from one *polis* followed by arrival and purification at another, have been expanded so that they take on cosmic proportions. The area to which he has been exiled seems to consist of the entirety of the familiar, mortal world.[139] Empedocles' narrator has not

[137] I follow, here, the influential interpretation of Vernant (1983) 3–32. On the significance of this passage, see more recently Currie (2012), who further discusses (among other issues) the respects in which Hesiod creates the impression that the golden age may yet be recreated.

[138] E.g. Picot (2008a) argues that the community of the blessed is on the moon; Trépanier (2017) 147–78 provides an elaborate argument for the location being the celestial vault; Primavesi (2008a), on the other hand, sees it as a metaphor for an earlier stage in the cycle.

[139] Assuming the most widely accepted interpretation of D16=B120, 'We came under this roof of a cave', that it refers to world of mortals to which the *daimon* has been banished (as implied by Porphyry's introduction to the fragment; thus, Wright [1995] 280 and Bollack [2003] 73–4; contrast Zuntz [1971] 255). D19=B126 may describe the estrangement from the divine community as being wrapped 'in a foreign cloak of flesh', although, there, both the object and the grammatically feminine subject of the participle 'wrapping' (περιστέλλουσα) are unclear.

been punished according to the law of a particular *polis*, but according to a universal one:

> ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν πάντων νόμιμον διά τ' εὐρυμέδοντος
> αἰθέρος ἠνεκέως τέταται διά τ' ἀπλέτου αὐγῆς
>
> But that which is lawful for all things
> Is stretched through the wide-ruling Aether and through the boundless light
> (D27a=B135)

Aristotle, who quotes this fragment, tells us that it comes in support of the injunction against killing living things (*Rhet.* 1.13.1373b14–16).[140] We can infer that this is the law that the narrator himself has broken in polluting his limbs through bloodshed (D10=B115), a law that holds sway over the cosmic realms (the Aether, the light) through which he has passed in the wanderings of his exile (D10=B115.9–11). Whilst sages were often painted as lawmakers,[141] Empedocles does not present his narrator as instituting new laws but as revealing the universal laws that have always existed. He is thus like Sophocles' Antigone, whom Aristotle also quotes in this context, in appealing to an objective law that overrides the mortal customs accepted by his addressees (Cf. Soph. *Ant.* 456–7).

Most clearly, however, our kinship with other species is illustrated by D29=B137, another fragment with affinities to Attic tragedy. Here, we are presented with the terrifying scenario of family members unwittingly sacrificing and eating one another:

> μορφὴν δ' ἀλλάξαντα πατὴρ φίλον υἱὸν ἀείρας
> σφάζει ἐπευχόμενος μέγα νήπιος· οἱ δ' ἀπορεῦνται
> λισσόμενον θύοντες· ὁ δ' αὖ νήκουστος ὁμοκλέων
> σφάξας ἐν μεγάροισι κακὴν ἀλεγύνατο δαῖτα.
> ὡς δ' αὔτως πατέρ' υἱὸς ἑλὼν καὶ μητέρα παῖδες
> θυμὸν ἀπορραίσαντε φίλας κατὰ σάρκας ἔδουσιν.
>
> The father, lifting up his own son who has changed shape,
> Cuts his throat, with a prayer – fool that he is! The others are at a loss
> While they sacrifice the suppliant; but he, deaf to the shouts,
> Has cut the throat and prepared an evil meal in his house,
> In the same way, a son seizes his father and children their mother,
> And ripping out their life they devour the flesh of their dear ones.
> (Trans. LM)

[140] Cf. similarly Cicero *Rep.* 3.11.19, who also attributes to Empedocles this specifically legal claim.

[141] Most famously Solon, but also Pittacus (Arist. *Pol.* 2.12.1274b18–20) and Chion (Diog. Laert. 1.68). Relevant, too, is Parmenides' later reputation as a lawgiver (Diog. Laert. 9.23; Strabo 6.1.1; Plut. *Adv. Col.* 32 1126A–B).

The example of the father sacrificing his beseeching child is reminiscent of Agamemnon's sacrifice of Iphigenia, whilst the 'evil meal' recalls the banquet of Thyestes. The gruesome imagery elicits pity and fear. But if we consider this example literally, within Empedocles' cosmology, then such instances will presumably be relatively rare. If you were to select at random a sheep for sacrifice, you would have to be particularly unlucky to choose one that happens to be a reincarnation of a deceased parent. Yet the instance is emblematic of a more general kinship in Empedocles' cosmology between all living things: what matters is not merely that a non-human animal might happen to be a reincarnated family member, but that non-human animals are creatures like us, formed of the same elements, and harbouring (at least in many cases) transmigrating *daimones*.[142] Our kinship with any potential sacrificial victim is elevated to a status analogous to that typically felt towards one's family members. The fragment thus appeals to our emotions and to a conventional notion of kinship to illustrate our wider kinship with all living things. The summary of the act at line 6 uses the same language as describes the 'greatest source of defilement' in the idealised community of D25=B128. This tragic and horrific image of society is thus the polar opposite of the idealised community under Love and, in failing to obey the universal law, is more representative of the generally carnivorous Greek world. The world we inhabit becomes the world of Attic tragedy, a world normally confined to the remote past or the geographically distant.[143]

To recapitulate: Empedocles' narrator conforms to a traditional pattern in Greek myth and legend of exiles, often killers, who arrive at a new location where they achieve purification, are accorded a particular authority and often play a role in the creation of new institutions such as laws and cult practices. D4=B112 and D10=B115 both cohere with this pattern. This, of course, cannot prove that the two fragments came from the same poem, but it does suggest that they are parts of the same narrative. The contrasting tones of the two fragments and the differences in the self-presentation of the narrator can be

[142] Most commentators assume that all humans and animals have such a *daimon*, but note Sedley (2007) 33–52, who argues that only certain animals (and not all humans) will enjoy reincarnation. I discuss this fragment, and my understanding of the Empedoclean *daimon*, in Mackenzie (forthcoming).

[143] That Attic tragedy typically represented such a remote world is demonstrated by the well-known case of Phrynichus' *Fall of Miletus*, a play that was banned from being re-performed, and resulted in its author being fined, because it reminded audiences 'of their *familiar* misfortunes' (οἰκεῖα κακά, Hdt. 6.21.10). In other words, it was banned partly because it did *not* depict such a remote world.

read as rhetorically effective: an initial *captatio benevolentiae* with praise of the *polis* assumes a new significance in light of the narrator's status as an exile from the gods; the localised perspective of the address to the Acragantines expands to encompass the cosmos as a whole. From this wider, cosmic perspective, we learn of an ideal society, from which the narrator has been exiled, that is the polar opposite of the world we inhabit. The text offers some guidance on how to achieve such an ideal society in its dietary restrictions. In this respect, the narrator is an aspiring reformer: he wants us to change our meat-eating ways and worship Love alone with vegetarian sacrifices. Such a process, it seems, would amount to a 'purification', since bloodshed itself is the cause of pollution. This sort of reformation would further conform to the traditional pattern identified, but, since this is a formally didactic text,[144] the pattern is not yet complete: the narrator has not yet achieved the purification of his audience through new institutions, because such a process is dependent on the audience's behaviour. A traditional pattern is evoked but not its closure: the end of the story that we find elsewhere – the establishment of new laws and cults – is omitted, and it is up to the audience themselves to determine how this story will end. The lack of closure to this pattern, then, acts as a prompt for an audience to complete this process of purification.

b Initiation, D257=B110 and the Education of the Singular Addressee

Empedocles evokes the 'didactic plot' of mystic initiation in a number of respects. As commentators have long pointed out, the doctrines of reincarnation and vegetarianism are paralleled in Pythagoreanism and Orphism, groups that practised initiatory rituals.[145] This connection is strengthened by the fact that the unnamed sage of D38=B129 is most plausibly identified as Pythagoras.[146] The fragments distinguish between speech that is *themis* for an audience to hear and that which is not (D44=B3.4; D54=B9.5), recalling the distinction made in the formulaic Orphic expression between those for

[144] That is, it is 'purporting to be intended to instruct', following the terminology of Heath (1985) 253.

[145] On Empedocles' connection with these groups, note already Kern (1888), but especially Riedweg (1995) and more recently Rodriguez (2005). On initiation in early Orphism, see e.g. Parker (1995) 484–6 and Bremmer (2014) 55–80; for Pythagoreanism, see Burkert (1972) 120–65 (on the view that, in the earliest sources, the Pythagorean and Orphic doctrines are connected or even identical, e.g. Hdt. 2.81); Kahn (2001) 8–9; and similarly, Riedweg (2008) 98–105 (although he does not use the term 'initiation', he regards the Pythagoreans as a 'sect' requiring members to take a vow of silence, cf. Iambl. *VP* 72).

[146] That this fragment is a reference to Pythagoras is claimed by Porphyry *VP* 30 and Iamblichus *VP* 67 (both reliant on the same source) and by Timaeus as reported by Diogenes Laertius 8.54. Diogenes adds that some say that Parmenides is referred to here. As Trépanier (2004) 124–5 points out, Pythagoras is the more likely subject, as he was more prominently associated with the theory of reincarnation (e.g. at Xenophanes D64=B7).

whom it is *themis* to hear and those who are uninitiated.[147] D8=B132 takes the form of a *makarismos* ('blessed is he who . . .') celebrating the man 'who has attained a wealth of divine thoughts', a type of expression especially associated with initiates into Eleusinian and other mysteries.[148] The acquisition of knowledge in Empedocles' cosmos is thus presented in terms appropriate for mystery-initiates; initiates themselves were often referred to as those who 'know'.[149] Furthermore, the purificatory function of the poem, implied by certain internal details (D44=B3.2; D257=B110.2) and by the title *Katharmoi*,[150] evokes this sort of initiation: the Eleusinian mysteries required initiates to be pure of bloodshed and, in addition, to undergo a ritual cleansing before the procession to the sanctuary of Demeter and Persephone (in 339 BCE one unlucky prospective initiate, while cleansing himself and his sacrificial piglet in the sea, was eaten by a shark).[151] Possessors of some of the 'Orphic' gold tablets are described as the 'pure from the pure' (*katharos*, *OF* 488.1; 489.1; 490.1; 491.1), whilst initiation into Orphic mystery cults is reported as the expiation of a previous crime.[152]

The distinction of a singular addressee further conforms to this pattern of initiation. In the most detailed study of Empedocles' addressees, Obbink argues that the author exploits 'a common archaic phenotype of a master (ritual-) craftsman indoctrinating his (occasionally dull-witted) apprentice', of which Hesiod's relationship with Perses in the *Works and Days* is the best preserved Greek example.[153] Thus, the student Pausanias is to learn the extraordinary skills of controlling the weather and bringing back the force of the dead (D43=B111) from the master-narrator. For Obbink, the narrator's use of insistent imperatives and his appeal to 'the simplest phenomenal entities, the most obvious features of the physical world' is an indication of the addressee's dull-wittedness.[154] However, the phenomena appealed to – such as the wider course of the cosmic cycle

[147] See Section 3c below.

[148] Cf. esp. *hDem.* 480 with Richardson (1974) *ad loc.* Other examples in an initiatory context include Pind. fr. 137a; Soph. fr. 837.; Eur. *Ba.* 72ff. Apul. *M.* 11.16.2ff. For a comprehensive list of examples, see Norden (1913) 99–100, 100 n. 1.

[149] See Chapter 2 n. 86 above.

[150] Cf. the examples cited at n. 128 above. Note in particular that Plato *Resp.* 2.364e mentions itinerant priests who 'persuade not only individuals but even cities' that they can achieve 'release and purifications (*katharmoi*)' through performing certain rituals.

[151] See Bremmer (2014) 4–5. For the requirement to be pure of bloodshed, note Ar. *Ran.* 354–71 with the scholion on 369; Isoc. 4.157. For the ritual cleansing, note Ephorus *FGrH* 70 F 80; for the shark story, Aeschin. 3.130 and schol. *ad loc.*; Plut. *Phoc.* 28.3.

[152] Plato *Resp.* 2.364b2–365a3; *Crat.* 400c. Cf. Pind. fr. 133, *Ol.* 2.58. This crime may be explained by the myth of Dionysus Zagreus, on which see Section 4c below.

[153] Obbink (1993) 52. [154] Obbink (1993) 83.

(D73), the deeper origins of humans, animals and gods (D77A=B21), or the presence of cosmic Love (D73.252) – are far from obvious.

Rather than seeing Pausanias as a dull-witted apprentice who is being taught a particular craft, I would suggest that he undergoes a more transformative experience than the apprentice-image implies. A notable point of contrast with Hesiod's addresses to Perses is that Empedocles uses, in addition to commands (in the form of imperatives or imperatival infinites, e.g. D41=B1, D258=B5, D28=B136, D74.245 etc.) and conditional clauses (D257=B110), future indicatives: 'You shall learn' (D42=B2.9); 'you shall cease the force of the tireless winds . . . you will make for mortals an opportune dryness out of a dark storm . . . and you shall lead from Hades the force of a dead man' (D43=B111). This grammatical form signifies a more confident prediction of the addressee's fate than is found in the *Works and Days* and is reminiscent both of prophecy – a context we might especially recall given the narrator's reputation as a source of oracles (D4=B112.10) – and the predictions made of the addressee in the 'Orphic' gold tablets.[155] This suggests a less mundane scenario than that of a master addressing an apprentice. The abilities to be acquired in D43=B111 equate to the assumption of divine status that the ideal student will achieve (D39=B146). Pausanias' education thus amounts to an acquisition of godhood rather than merely of certain skills, a scenario that recalls the transformative experiences of mystic initiates, which, at least in some cases, was conceived of as an apotheosis.[156]

The narrator distinguishes Pausanias as the addressee at D41=B1, which, according to Diogenes Laertius, 'prefaced the material On Nature'.[157] This testimony, along with the evidence that D4=B112 opened the poem and D10=B115 occurred a little later, can be taken to suggest that, on the single-poem hypothesis, after an initial address to the Acragantines and the story of the narrator's exile, the narrator shifts to a singular addressee before delivering the details of the cosmology.[158] If this is indeed the structure, then, within the fiction of the poem, it is a singular, distinguished pupil

[155] For the use of future indicatives in prophecy cf. e.g. *Od.* 11.118; Pind. *Isthm.* 51–2 (where the eagle 'spoke like a prophet', εἶπέν τε φωνήσαις ἅτε μάντις ἀνήρ); Soph. *Ant.* 998, 1067; *OT* 453, 456, 457; *OC* 1533. Second-person singular future indicatives in some of the Orphic gold tablets: *OF* 474, 475, 476, 477.

[156] See Tor (2017) 270–3, who criticises earlier deniers of this view. Note especially the gold tablets, *OF* 488.9 and 487.4.

[157] Diog. Laert. 8.60 ὧι δὴ καὶ τὰ Περὶ φύσεως προσπεφώνηκεν οὕτως. As Trépanier (2004) 26–9 argues, this need not be taken as the title of a single poem but may only be a particular section.

[158] Obbink (1993) 70–6 argues, similarly, that the poem began with an initial hymn to a deity followed by the Muse-invocations and then the address to Pausanias, but there is no evidence for such a hymn (*pace* Sedley [1998] 1–34, who argues that we can reconstruct Empedocles' proem from Lucretius, but this approach seems methodologically unsound: Lucretius creatively adapts rather than slavishly follows his models, so that we cannot reconstruct the structure of the latter from the

who is granted the divine narrator's god's-eye view of the cosmos. This individual is most clearly distinguished from the masses at D42=B2:

στεινωποὶ μὲν γὰρ παλάμαι κατὰ γυῖα κέχυνται·
πολλὰ δὲ δείλ' ἔμπαια, τά τ' ἀμβλύνουσι μέριμνας.
παῦρον δ' ἐν ζωῆισι βίου μέρος ἀθρήσαντες
ὠκύμοροι καπνοῖο δίκην ἀρθέντες ἀπέπταν
αὐτὸ μόνον πεισθέντες, ὅτωι προσέκυρσεν ἕκαστος
πάντοσ' ἐλαυνόμενοι, τὸ δ' ὅλον <πᾶς> εὔχεται εὑρεῖν·
οὕτως οὔτ' ἐπιδερκτὰ τάδ' ἀνδράσιν οὔτ' ἐπακουστά
οὔτε νόῳ περιληπτά. σὺ <δ'> οὖν, ἐπεὶ ὧδ' ἐλιάσθης,
πεύσεαι· οὐ πλεῖόν γε[159] βροτείη μῆτις ὄρωρεν.

For narrow resources are spread out across their limbs;
And many wretched things are in their way, and things which blunt their wits.
And having seen a small part of life during their lifetimes
Swift-fated, they fly off, lifted up in the manner of smoke
Persuaded of that thing alone, whatever it is that each one has encountered
Driven in every direction, but everyone claims to have found the whole;
Thus, these things are neither seen nor heard by men
Nor grasped with the mind. But you, since you have deviated here,
Shall learn. Mortal intelligence has never soared further.

The image is of one who, perhaps by chance, has 'deviated'[160] from the normal run of mortals and will learn more than mortal wit can generally reach. The rest are collectively indistinguishable, flitting about like smoke in their ephemeral concerns. They have 'seen' only a small part of life and this limited vision will contrast with the broad, divine perspective that Pausanias will enjoy, for which visual language is repeatedly used (D44=B3.9; D77a=B21.1; D257=B110.2; D74.326=B76.3; D73.292–3, 300). Here, then, Pausanias, *pace* Obbink, is not a dull-witted foil; rather, an audience is encouraged to identify with this distinguished individual, against the ignorant masses. Such a distinction, consisting in being granted

former). Trépanier (2004) 31–72 argues in greater detail for the structure of the poem that I sketch above.

[159] Along with Bollack and more recent editors (e.g. Mansfeld and Primavesi [2012]; LM), I see no reason to emend here. DK adopt Karsten's emendation οὐ πλέον ἠέ, 'no more than', but it would be strange to place such a limitation on what Pausanias shall learn, especially since he will attain superhuman skills (D43=B111). Wright (1995) obelises, but expresses a preference for the more modest sort of sense provided by Karsten's emendation on the grounds that it coheres with Sextus' introduction to the fragment, in which he mentions the limitations of 'mortal reason' (*anthrōpinos logos*) – but Sextus could easily be referring to lines 1–6 of the fragment.

[160] διάζομαι often seems to refer to a departure from a particular trajectory. E.g. *Il.* 15.520 (shrinking beneath an attack); *Il.* 23.879 (the drooping of a bird's wings, a sign that it has died); *Od.* 5.462 (Odysseus deviating from the path of the river).

access to a vision inaccessible to most, further recalls accounts of mystery-initiates, as we saw in the previous chapter with respect to Parmenides (see Chapter 2 Section 4f above).

Most conspicuously, however, initiatory language occurs at D257=B110:

εἰ γάρ κέν σφ᾽ ἀδινῇσιν ὑπὸ πραπίδεσσιν ἐρείσας
εὐμενέως καθαρῇσιν ἐποπτεύσῃς μελέτῃσιν,
ταῦτά τέ σοι μάλα πάντα διᾶ᾽ αἰῶνος παρέσονται,
ἄλλα τε πόλλ᾽ ἀπὸ τῶνδε κτήσεαι· αὐτὰ γὰρ αὔξει
ταῦτ᾽ εἰς ἦθος ἕκαστον, ὅπῃ φύσις ἐστὶν ἑκάστῳ.
εἰ δὲ σύ γ᾽ ἀλλοίων ἐπορέξεαι οἷα κατ᾽ ἄνδρας
μυρία δειλὰ πέλονται ἃ τ᾽ ἀμβλύνουσι μερίμνας,
ἦ σ᾽ ἄφαρ ἐκλείψουσι περιπλομένοιο χρόνοιο
σφῶν αὐτῶν ποθέοντα φίλην ἐπὶ γένναν ἱκέσθαι·
πάντα γὰρ ἴσθι φρόνησιν ἔχειν καὶ νώματος αἶσαν.

For if, planting them under your firm organs of thought
You gaze on them benevolently with pure efforts,
These things will all be present to you throughout your lifetime,
And you will obtain many other good things from them. For these things
Will increase themselves in regard to each character, how each thing has its nature
But if you reach out for the other kinds of things, the sort of things which, among men
Are countless and wretched and which blunt their wits,
Certainly, they will suddenly leave you in the course of time
Longing to come to the dear race of their own
For know that all things have intellect and a share in thought.

The verb ἐποπτεύω can mean 'become an ἐπόπτης, be admitted to the highest grade at the mysteries' (LSJ *s.v.* II.) and this sense is activated by the mention of 'pure efforts', since the word for 'pure', *katharos*, often refers to ritual purity.[161] The 'blunting' of wits (line 7) recalls the distinction of the addressee from the masses at D42=B2.2. The process of education here, then, is modelled on that of initiation, with the narrator performing the role as mystagogue.

For some scholars, these details indicate that the poem is designed to perform a role in an actual process of initiation into an esoteric

[161] See Willi (2008) 236–7. See, e.g. Pl. *Phd.* 250c for ἐποπτεύω as 'viewing' in the mysteries (as one who has become an ἐπόπτης, the highest grade of initiation) and for καθαρός as ritual purity in a mystic context. εὐμενής is often an epithet of gods (*h.Hom.* 22.7, Pind. *Pyth.* 2.25, Aesch. *Supp.* 686) and in Attic is not normally used of human beings but is applied to a goddess in a prayer at Ar. *Lys.* 204 (thus, Willi [2003] 28–9).

group.[162] The use of a theogonical poem to this end would be paralleled in the Derveni papyrus, where the commentator seems to think that the right process of initiation depends upon the correct interpretation of the poem he quotes.[163] The context in which the Strasbourg papyrus was preserved further supports the notion the poem was (eventually) used in a ritualistic context: the papyrus formed part of a funerary wreath for a corpse, a detail that may indicate that the deceased hoped to bear the master's instructions into the next life.[164] However, the internal evidence of the poem scarcely supports the notion that it was composed for an esoteric context in this manner. At no point does the narrator mention initiatory rites (τελεταί or μυστήρια) or use the verb for the process of initiation (μυέω). As we have seen, the relationship depicted between teacher and 'initiate' is unlikely to represent the actual circumstances of performance: the poem was composed not only for the ears of Pausanias, if indeed he was ever a real person. Any member of the audience could theoretically choose to play the role of Pausanias and distinguish themselves from the masses by refraining from meat-eating and receiving the wisdom of the poem in the correct way.

If we are to think of the education of Empedocles' student as an initiation (as the initiatory language of D257=B110 encourages us to do), then this is a new kind of initiation, one that differs fundamentally from the sort of rituals required for membership of the Eleusinian mysteries or the Orphic or Pythagorean mystery cults. A closer analysis of D257=B110 will suggest that, rather than offering an actual initiation into a particular cult, the fragment refigures the process of initiation as one of understanding the nature of the cosmos in terms of Empedocles' elemental cosmology.

According to the most influential interpretation, that of A. A. Long, Empedocles here conceives of his teachings in physical terms, as actually composed of the same elements that they depict. Thus, when Pausanias is to plant 'them' in his 'organs of thought', this physical language is meant literally.[165] Long sees this hypothesis as making the best sense of lines 4–5, glossing them as, 'the elements (of my teaching) cause each

[162] Kingsley (1995) 367–8, (2002) 352–3. Similarly, on Empedocles as an initiator (but without reference to this particular fragment), Gemelli Marciano (2001), (2005b).

[163] At least, according to some scholars of this highly problematic text. See e.g. Betegh (2004) 349–72; Bernabé (2014). This view is lent support by Adeimantus' description of wandering initiators who use Orphic texts at Pl. *Resp.* 2. 364b2–365a3.

[164] As Most (1999) 356 notes; also argued by Clay (2012).

[165] Long (1966) 270, followed by (e.g.) Wright (1995) 258–9 and Wolfsdorf (2009) 50–1. Similarly, Schwabl (1956) and Bollack (1965–9) III.2 577 take the antecedent of *sphe* as the elements and the six permanent entities respectively.

thing to grow in its own way, according to its nature'. Whilst this fragment most plausibly concerns how Pausanias is to receive the narrator's teachings, I find it preferable to take the physical language figuratively. A number of considerations count against the notion that Empedocles' teachings are literally conceived of as being composed of the four elements in this way. It may seem prima facie implausible that the process of education should be thought of as simply physically increasing the elements within oneself, for there is no reason to think that, for Empedocles, an increase in mass accompanies an increase in intelligence; rather, what seems to be more important is the proportion of the elements and the extent to which they are blended.[166] Instead, it is more economical to suppose that he understood the teachings to be instances of sound and so composed of air, since Aëtius (4.16.1=D227=A93) tells us that he explained hearing as occurring when 'breath' falls against the cartilaginous part of the ear.[167] The use of physical language to describe speech or teachings is traditional. Particularly comparable are hexameter expressions where addressees are told to 'cast' instructions into their thoughts or spirit.[168] Elsewhere, Empedocles also presents his utterances in physical terms (D44=B3, D47=B4.3, D75=B35.1–2), but in ways which seem incompatible with the view that they are formed out of the four elements. In D44=B3 and D75=B35.1–2, his poetry is presented as water, in a manner which may evoke specifically the water used in purificatory rituals, but no one would suggest that his speech is somehow literally conceived of as watery. Here, the physical language is similarly figurative.

Rather than denoting *physical* increase within the body of Pausanias, I propose that lines 4–5 illustrate the increase in his understanding once he has grasped the basic principles of the elemental theory. The lines can thus be understood roughly as follows: 'these (teachings) will increase themselves (αὐτὰ γὰρ αὔξει ταῦτ') *with regard to* each character (εἰς ἦθος ἕκαστον), how the nature of each of them is'. εἰς in the sense of 'with regard to' is well

[166] As mentioned above, we think especially with the blood (D24=B105), a substance comprising a harmonious blend of the four elements that comes about through the agency of Love (D190=B98; cf. A78; A85). Kamtekar (2009) 223–5 raises further objections to Long's view.

[167] A process discussed by Long (1966) 265. Moreover D73.291–3 indicates that the student's education will not depend on absorbing effluences of teachings.

[168] E.g. σὺ δ' ἐνὶ φρεσὶ βάλλεο σῇσι (*Il.* 1.297, 4.39, 5.259 etc.; *Od.* 11.454, 16.281, 16.299 etc.; Hes. *Op.* 107, 274); σὺ δὲ ταῦτα τεῷ ἐνικάτθεο θυμῷ (Hes. *Op.* 27; cf. *Od.* 23.233). Wright (1995) 258–9 also notes the Homeric description of words as 'winged' (*Il.* 1.201, 2.7, 4.69 etc.), as going past the 'barrier of the teeth' (*Il.* 4.350, 14.83 etc.) and put by the listener into the *thumos* or spirit (*Od.* 1.361, 21.355).

attested in both verse and prose texts of the fifth century (LSJ *s.v.* IV). I take the phrase ὅπῃ φύσις ἐστὶν ἑκάστωι, 'how the nature of each of them is' as an epexegetical indirect question that denotes the information that the teachings will explain once they have 'increased'.[169] The teachings will expand in the sense that, if Pausanias has grasped the basic idea that all things are composed of the four elements, he will be able to explain the 'character' and 'nature' of each thing. This will involve identifying the elements that are present in particular compounds, just as, in D74, the narrator promises that Pausanias will 'see' the 'earth' (ὄψει χθόνα) in the shells and horns of certain animals. Whilst Pausanias requires the physical presence of the elements within him to perform such cognitive tasks (as D207=B109 indicates), there is nothing to suggest that the elements are literally conferred by the narrator's utterance. Instead, the presence of the elements in our bodies seems to arise, as we might expect, through nutrition (Simpl. *in Phys.* 372.5).

On this view, the fragment proposes that a grasp of the basic components of Empedocles' cosmology will help us to understand anything we might encounter. By contrast, most mortals vainly attempt to understand the 'countless things' they perceive without the aid of the elemental theory. The final line of the preserved text is probably to be explained as reassuring Pausanias that the ideas will stay with him regardless of whatever incarnation he will subsequently experience:[170] even if he is a non-human animal, he will still have a share in thought and so these ideas will be relevant. The situation is, then, similar to that at the end of book 1 of the *De rerum natura*, a passage which may imitate these very lines:

> Haec sic pernosces parva perductus opella;
> namque alid ex alio clarescet nec tibi caeca
> nox iter eripiet, quin ultima naturai
> pervideas: ita res accendent lumina rebus.

> Thus you will learn these things when led by a little effort;
> for one thing will become clear from another, nor will dark
> night break off your journey to prevent you from
> seeing the limits of nature: thus, things kindle fires for things

[169] For similar indirect interrogative uses of ὅπῃ in hexameter, note *Od.* 8.573, 9.279, 9.457, 10.190–2.

[170] Hippolytus *Haer.* 7.29.25 takes it as claiming that there is, in addition to Love and Strife, a νοητὴ τρίτη τις δύναμις. However, such a 'third power' is nowhere else attested for Empedocles, and Mansfeld (1992) 221–6 convincingly argues that Hippolytus attributes such a view to him to find precedent for his contemporary Prepon's theory of a third and 'just' principle intermediary between good and evil (*Haer.* 7.31).

As Kranz pointed out long ago, the repetitions (*alid ex alio . . . res rebus*) seem stylistically similar to the Empedocles passage (ταῦτά . . . αὐτά . . . ταῦτά . . . ἕκαστον . . . ἑκάστωι) and direct influence is possible.[171] In the Lucretius passage, the idea of *res* will enable the student to understand further *res* in the universe. A similar process occurs in the Empedocles passage, where the basic idea of the four elements will enable the student to identify instances of the elements in the world at large (cf. D207=B109).

A further consideration in favour of this interpretation is the fact that it coheres with some of the fragment's imagery. As Petrovic and Petrovic suggest, the terms for 'planting' (ἐρείσας) and 'growing' (αὔξει) have vegetal connotations that recall the reference to the elements as *rhizomata* or 'roots' (D57=B6).[172] Whilst this imagery might be taken to support Long's view that the teachings are literally composed of the four elements, I would suggest instead that it reveals how the process by which we understand the cosmos is analogous to the composition of the cosmos as a whole. For just as complex phenomena are constituted by the four basic elements, so our understanding of those phenomena is built up from the basic idea of the six permanent entities. Such an analogy between our understanding of the world, and the world at large, also underlies the second-person singular command of D47=B4.3:

> γνῶθι διατμηθέντος ἐνὶ σπλάγχοισι λόγοιο.
>
> Know this in your innards when the account has been cut up.

It is as if the account were itself a compound that Pausanias is to dissect into its constituent elements so that he can reassemble them into a complex picture of the world.

This meta-didactic comment, addressed to the singular addressee, has, I suggest, been misunderstood. Kamtekar takes 'cut up' to be a metaphor for analytical reasoning, which, she tentatively proposes, is the result of Strife in Empedocles' cosmology.[173] Whilst her reading is supported by the verb διατμηθέντος, 'cut up', which elsewhere refers to the activity of Strife (D73.305=B20.4), it misses a crucial irony in the line. For this is a further instance of the reappropriation of religious imagery in Empedocles' poem. The

[171] Kranz (1944) 77, 104. On Lucretius' reception of Empedocles more generally, see Sedley (1998) 1–34 and especially Garani (2007).

[172] Petrovic and Petrovic (2016), 98–100, although I have not been able to find an instance where ἐρείδειν means 'to plant a seed' or 'crop'.

[173] Kamtekar (2009) 224–5, followed by LM *ad loc.* and Gheerbrant (2017) 177–9, who identifies the wordplay I discuss here but does not explore its implications in the context of Empedocles' injunctions against animal sacrifice.

language of 'cutting up' and 'innards' evokes animal sacrifice. The σπλάγχνα were especially 'the heart, lungs, liver, kidneys, which in sacrifices were reserved to be eaten by the sacrificers at the beginning of their feast' (LSJ *s.v.* I, citing *Il.* 1.464; *Od.* 3.9; Ar. *Pax* 1105; *Eq.* 410 etc.).[174] We have, then, a case of 'interaction' in the imagery: the language, in the metaphor, of 'cutting up', should properly be used of an item outside of the metaphor, the 'innards'.[175] Furthermore, the σπλάγχνα were used in the most common form of prophecy during Empedocles' time, extispicy, the inspection of the sacrificial victim's entrails, especially the liver, by the seer (Aesch. *PV* 493; Eur. *Supp.* 212; *El.* 828,838; Aeschin. 3.160).[176] Empedocles' use of the word σπλάγχοισι, in the context of 'knowing' something and spoken by a speaker who has appeared as a *mantis* or 'prophet' (D4=B112.10), recalls this particular practice. The point is precisely that the speaker's prophetic utterance does not derive from the killing of an animal and the dismantling of its entrails; rather, what is to be 'cut up' is the *logos* itself, which is then to be placed within the 'entrails' of Pausanias, the seat of his thought (cf. D24=B105.3). Far from indicating the agency of Strife, the language hints at the contrast between the purity of the speaker's mantic utterance and the Strife-inspired pollution caused by animal sacrifice. D47=B4.3 thus coheres with the instruction in D257=B110.2 that we should gaze upon the teachings with 'pure efforts'.

The 'initiation' in D257=B110, then, refers to a process by which the student will distinguish himself from the common run of mortals and attain a superior understanding of the world through grasping the basic principles of Empedocles' teaching. Although this process shares certain similarities with initiation as it is attested for mystery cults – access to knowledge inaccessible to most people; the attainment of a quasi-divine status – it is grounded in Empedocles' distinctive cosmology. As well as illustrating Empedocles' epistemology, the initiatory imagery entices us to become a member of an elite group, but it is an elite group defined primarily in terms of an understanding of the cosmos that would be accessible to any recipient of the text. The initiatory vocabulary of D257=B110, rather than indicating an actual esoteric-religious context for the fragment, is better seen as contributing to the wider rhetorical purpose of the poem, in encouraging the audience to accept Empedocles' cosmology.

[174] See also Gould (2001) 218–21 for discussion of this element of animal sacrifice.

[175] For this sort of 'interaction' throughout Archaic Greek poetry, see Silk (1974). A good example is Pind. fr. 75.5 ἰοδέτων λάχετε στεφάνων τᾶν τ' ἐαριδρόπων ἀοιδᾶν, 'receive violet-bound garlands and songs that are plucked in spring', where really it is the violets that should be 'plucked'.

[176] Flower (2008) 25.

c *The Two Narratives Combined*

Two distinct narratives, then, are identifiable in the fragments. The story of the blood-polluted exile who arrives to play an important role in the history of a particular *polis* is apparently addressed to a plural audience. The 'didactic plot' of mystic initiation involves a select, singular student. The former structures the story of the narrator, whilst the latter structures the story of the internal addressee, Pausanias, and implicitly that of the individual audience member. But the two narratives are related, primarily in the notion of purification: blood-exiles are often depicted as oikists, colony-founders, precisely because the foundation of a new *polis* equates to an act of purification for a past crime. Initiation, too, is closely associated with purification, in at least two respects: Eleusinian initiates had to undergo purification in the form of a ritual cleansing before the procession to Eleusis, whilst in other cases, the process of initiation itself was conceived of as a means of purification.

There is also a more specific connection between the *daimon*'s purification and that involved in mystic initiation. In some cases, initiation was conceived as a purification for an earlier crime. In a well-known passage, Plato's Adeimantus complains of 'begging priests and prophets' (ἀγύρται and μάντεις) who go to the rich and claim that through 'rituals and incantations' (θυσίαις τε καὶ ἐπῳδαῖς) they can provide 'purifications' (καθαρμοί) for any past crimes, including crimes committed by the deceased. They make use of books ascribed to Musaeus or Orpheus and call these rituals 'initiations' (τελεταί; *Resp.* 2.364b2–365a3). It is possible that one such itinerant initiator was the author of the Derveni papyrus, who makes use of an Orphic theogony and criticises rival 'mages' who 'perform sacrifices as if paying a penalty' (Col. 6.5; 20).[177] Later sources would explain initiation into Orphic mystery cults as an expiation for a primordial blood-pollution in terms of the myth of Dionysus Zagreus. In this myth, Dionysus is the son of Zeus and Persephone/Kore (rather than Semele). He is murdered, dismembered and eaten by the Titans, whom Zeus then destroys with the thunderbolt, and humans are formed from the soot that remains. A second Dionysus is then formed from the heart. Consequently, humans have both a guilty, Titanic element and a divine one (from the digested chunks of Dionysus). Initiation is therefore explained as a purification of the original crime of the Titans.[178] Pindar may have

[177] On this connection and the identity of the commentator, see, recently, Piano (2016) 277–308.

[178] Olymp. *In Phd.* 1.3=*OF* 304 I; 313 II; 318 III; 320 I. See West (1983) 140–75 for the occurrence of the myth in Orphic theogonies. Earlier sources connect the myth to the mysteries (e.g. Diod. Sic.

been familiar with this explanation for certain kinds of initiation, as fr. 133 attests:

> οἷσι δὲ Φερσεφόνα ποινὰν παλαιοῦ πένθεος
> δέξεται, ἐς τὸν ὕπερθεν ἅλιον κείνων ἐνάτῳ ἔτεϊ
> ἀνδιδοῖ ψυχὰς πάλιν, ἐκ τᾶν βασιλῆες ἀγαυοί
> καὶ σθένει κραιπνοὶ σοφίᾳ τε μέγιστοι
> ἄνδρες αὔξοντ'·ἐς δὲ τὸν λοιπὸν χρόνον ἥροες ἁγνοὶ πρὸς ἀνθρώπων
> καλέονται 5
>
> But for those from whom Persephone shall receive
> Penalty for her ancient grief, in the ninth year, into the upper sunlight
> She will return their souls again and from them proud kings
> And those swift in strength and greatest in wisdom
> Arise; and for the rest of time they are called sacred heroes by men 5
> (trans. Race [1997], adapted)

A select group thus enjoy benefits after reincarnation through paying the penalty for Persephone's 'ancient grief', an expression which probably refers to her grief at the murder of her son, Dionysus, by the Titans. As commentators have observed, the expression mirrors Empedocles D39=B146, 'at the end, they are prophets and singers and doctors / and chieftains / from whence gods sprout up, greatest in honours'.[179] Pindar operated in a similar cultural context to Empedocles: he was his older contemporary and composed epinicians for Sicilian victors, including the Acragantine brothers Theron (*Ol.* 2, 3) and Xenokrates (*Pyth.* 6; *Isthm.* 2). These examples of initiation as the expiation of a past crime indicate a specific point of overlap between the narrative of Pausanias' initiation and the story of the *daimon*: like the *daimon*'s cycle, Pausanias' initiation involves the purification of a past crime. Certainly, if Pausanias is a meat-eater, he will be in need of such purification according to the principles of Empedocles' cosmology.

3.62.8ff.; the earliest source that certainly mentions the myth is Callim. fr. 643). Walter Burkert has argued that Pind. fr. 133.1 and Hdt. 2.62, 132, 179 allude to it ([1983] 225, [1987a] 73, 155 n. 38). Certain 'Orphic' gold tablets (*OF* 488, 489, 490) may also allude to the myth (thus, Bernabé and Jiménez San Cristóbal [2008] 40–4, 105–9). Edmonds (2013) 296–391 approaches the whole topic with a salutary scepticism, pointing to the fact that the dismemberment of Dionysus, the punishment of the Titans, the creation of humans, and human inherited guilt are four components that are never found together in any extant source. However, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, and I find highly plausible the hypothesis that the myth combined these four components from the time of Pindar.

[179] E.g. Wright (1995) 291; Riedweg (1995) 44–5; Rodriguez (2005) 65–7. On the eschatological background to the Pindaric fragment, see Lloyd-Jones (1985).

I suggest, then, that Empedocles' initiatory language hints that the student will achieve a purification of the crime of bloodshed. The story of the *daimon* is thus an example demonstrating that we, too, are in need of purification. This process finds explanation in Empedocles' cosmology, where ritual 'purification' is rationalised as the physical purification of Love from the stain of Strife. Thus, in D10=B115, the guilty *daimon* 'stains' or 'pollutes' (μιήνηι)[180] his 'dear limbs' (φίλα γυῖα)' (line 3) through committing an act of bloodshed, an action that equates to 'trusting in mad Strife' (νείκεϊ μαινομένωι πίσυνος, line 14).[181] On the other hand, we perform our most effective thinking with the blood (D24=B105), a substance comprising a harmonious blend of the four elements that can only come about through the agency of Love (D190=B98; cf. D189<A78).[182] Accordingly, the sage of D91=B27a (if the line is to be attributed to Empedocles)[183] lacks strife (*stasis*, 'civic strife' and *dēris*, 'warfare') within his limbs. An individual's purification, in Empedocles' cosmos, thus has a cognitive dimension: purified Love is responsible for the most effective thought and – if we take the student's 'initiation' to involve a purification – a deeper understanding of the cosmos.

Whilst initiation is a practice that stereotypically focusses on the individual and the distinction of that individual from the masses, in this case, the purification of the individual serves as a synecdoche for the purification of the community as a whole: one purpose of the text is to persuade its audience to relinquish animal sacrifice and worship Love, effectively establishing a new community; it will achieve this end by 'initiating' its individual recipients, leading them to recognise the common origins of all living things. Expiation of guilt, the acquisition of knowledge and the transformation of society's institutions are commingled in the figuration of the response to the text as one of initiation and purification.

The Muse-invocation at D44=B3 seems programmatic of these functions:

> ἀλλὰ θεοὶ τῶν μὲν μανίην ἀποτρέψατε γλώσσης,
> ἐκ δ' ὁσίων στομάτων καθαρὴν ὀχετεύσατε πηγήν

[180] Following, here, Stephanus' universally accepted emendation for the manuscripts' incomprehensible μιν.

[181] The connection is even more explicit if we accept Diels' supplement for the lacuna at the start of line 4, νείκεῖ, so that the *daimon* 'stains his dear limbs in Strife'.

[182] On these fragments as evidence for the principle that, the greater the influence of Love, the more effective the thinking, note Kahn (1960) 15–16; Long (1966) 267–7; Broadie (1999) 219–20; Laks (1999) 267.

[183] The line is transmitted anonymously by Plut. *Princ. phil.* 777C, and was attributed to Empedocles by Wilamowitz (1902) 326.

καὶ σέ, πολυμνήστη λευκώλενε παρθένε Μοῦσα,
ἄντομαι, ὧν θέμις ἐστὶν ἐφημερίοισιν ἀκούειν,
πέμπε παρ' Εὐσεβίης ἐλάουσ' εὐήνιον ἅρμα. (D44=B3.1–5)[184]

But, gods, turn away their madness from my tongue
And channel a pure stream from holy mouths,
And you, much-wooed, white-armed maiden,
I entreat, the things which it is right for ephemerals to hear,
Send, driving your well-built chariot from Piety.

The identity of the 'gods' in the first line is unclear – they may be specifically the six permanent entities, or this may be a prayer to the gods in general.[185] Similarly unclear is the antecedent of 'their', which Hardie takes to refer specifically to other poets, but since 'madness' is elsewhere associated with Strife and bloodshed (D10=B115.14), it more obviously refers to meat-eating mortals in general.[186] In any case, the 'pure spring' and the 'holy mouths' evoke ritual purity. Water imagery in general is commonly used as a metaphor for poetry,[187] but Empedocles' 'pure spring' has a more specific significance, for it recalls in particular the springs from which water was drawn to 'purify', either medicinally – the sick would sometimes bathe in such springs in the belief that they remove diseases – or ritually, in which case water from particular springs was used to 'purify' participants of evils at the start of certain rituals.[188] The metaphor thus implies that the poem has the same purifying function as purificatory water, of cleansing the addressees of the Strife within them. If, as seems prima facie likely, the fragment occurred early in the poem, such imagery

[184] Along with LM, I take lines 6–13 of this fragment as addressed to Pausanias. I see no need to posit, with Wright (1995) 157, a substantial *lacuna* between the two sections on the basis of the shift in addressee; a somewhat abrupt shift between divine and mortal addressee is paralleled at Hes. *Op.* 9–10.

[185] Bollack (1965–9) took them to be the six permanent entities; Hardie (2013) 231 tentatively takes them as a reference to the four elements (A32=Aët. 1.7.28); Gheerbrant (2017) 114, 119–20 sees them as the four elements plus Love. However, the heightened emotion suggested by the content and the imperatives of the fragment would make an exclamation to the gods in general at this point appropriate (cf. Aesch. *Supp.* 77).

[186] Hardie (2013) 210. Wright (1995) 158 argues for a more general reference. Cf. the general criticism of mortals in D42=B2.

[187] See Nünlist (1998) 178–205. Some pertinent parallels are Hes. *Theog.* 39–40 and Pind. *Nem.* 7.62–3.

[188] Especially comparable is Soph. *OC* 469–70 πρῶτον μὲν ἱερὰς ἐξ ἀειρύτου χοὰς/ **κρήνης** ἐνεγκοῦ, δι' **ὁσίων** χειρῶν θιγών, 'First bring holy libations from an ever-flowing spring, taking them in unblemished hands.' See further Parker (1983) 212–13 for medicinal pure springs and 226–7 for ritual ones. Healing springs are attested by e.g. Hdt. 4.90 and Hippoc. *Epid.* 5.9. Springs used for ritual purification are attested at Theophr. *Char.* 16.2, Ap. Rhod. 3.860, Paus. 2.17.1. Empedocles himself may allude to this kind of purification at D31=B141, where he describes an action which Theon of Smyrna labels a καθαρμόν; although there it is likely that the springs are metaphorical springs of blood, and the fragment is referring to animal sacrifice (see Wright [1995] 289–90).

would serve as an appropriate overture for a text that will 'initiate' us: this invocation takes the place of the ritual cleansing that was a prerequisite to such an experience.

The address to the Muse in lines 3–5 is further suggestive of a ritual context. In contrast with other Muse-invocations where the Muse is told to speak or sing, the command here to send a chariot is a striking metaphor, which may allude to Parmenides' chariot journey.[189] The unusual quality of this invocation underlines that she will govern 'what it is right for ephemerals to hear' and that her chariot (unlike Parmenides' one) comes from 'piety'. Line 4 recalls the conventional Orphic line, 'I speak to those for whom it is right (οἷς θέμις ἐστί); shut your doors, uninitiated!' (*OF* 3), which, was also echoed in Parmenides (D4=B1.28).[190] The scenario, then, is that we will hear a pure speech akin to the sort of speech that is normally preserved only for ritually purified initiates. If the 'madness' at the start of D44=B3 is, like the madness at D10=B115.14, a consequence of Strife, then we are further justified in treating the 'purity' to which it is opposed as a purity of Love from Strife's stain.[191] This understanding of the Muse's 'pure spring' is corroborated by the fact that 'piety' (*Eusebie*) only occurs elsewhere in the fragments specifically as piety towards Love, in the idealised community that knows no Strife (D25=B128.4). This invocation implies, then, that the narrator's speech has a purificatory function, in washing away the strife from our bodies, something that it will achieve through initiating us into his understanding of the world.

5 The Effects of Empedocles' Narratives

If the ideal function of Empedocles' text is ultimately to purify an audience by convincing them to worship Love and refrain from acts of Strife, it is

[189] On the contrast with other Muse-invocations, see n. 49 above.

[190] The recollection of this line in Empedocles is observed by Riedweg (1995) 54.

[191] This consideration may weigh in favour of the view, first originating from Cornford, that the *daimon* is effectively a shard of Love who has been contaminated by Strife. This view was first suggested by Cornford (1912) 237–40, who was followed by Long (1949); Kirk and Raven (1957) 358–61; Kahn (1960) 21–3; and O'Brien (1969) 325–36 (who mentions unpublished lecture notes in which Cornford elaborated the theory), (1995) 442–3, 452–6, (2006) 54–5. Martin and Primavesi (1999) 90–5 express support for it. However, alternative possibilities are espoused by (among others) Long (1966) 275–6, who contends that the question of the physical basis of the *daimon* simply would not have occurred to Empedocles; Barnes (1982) 495–501, who argues that the δαίμονες are compounds of elements, and on this point is followed by Sedley (2007) 51 n. 62; Trépanier (2014) and (2017); and Shaw (2014), who argues that he is a portion of Aither. Whilst I find Cornford's theory the most plausible, for the purposes of the present chapter, I am agnostic on this issue, but see further Mackenzie (forthcoming).

designed to achieve this end through means that are characteristic of both Archaic conceptions of song and later conceptions of the poetic. In the present section, I shall explore four respects in which Empedocles' use of these narratives exploits traditional features of Greek verse to achieve his didactic and transformative ends: (a) its connection with myth, (b) its emotionally engaging qualities, (c) its ability to make an audience visualise phenomena they cannot literally see and (d) its capacity to invite penetrating, subtextual readings.

a Empedocles and Myth

André Laks and Oliver Primavesi have characterised the story of the *daimon* as a myth, in presenting an alternative type of account to the cosmology, one that illustrates different facets of Empedocles' philosophy. For Laks, the tension between the two accounts draws us into a dialectic between different ways of understanding the world. In particular, we are to reflect on whether Love and Strife are primarily principles of cosmic processes, or of human/daimonic action; whether their onset is inevitable (as in the cosmology), or whether it derives from our choices (as in the daimonology).[192] For Primavesi, the daimonology functions as an allegory for the cosmology: the disintegration of the community of the *daimones* symbolises the disintegration of the Sphere.[193] This is an extreme approach, one which is much less economical than supposing that such a community is actually meant to exist somewhere (or at some point) in the cosmos.[194] Laks' understanding is attractively subtle. But the claim that daimonology is in some sense a myth requires further precision.

As is well-known, *muthos* only acquires its later sense of 'myth' in the Classical period, probably with the Sophists, in contradistinction to *logos* or 'rational explanation'.[195] The Empedoclean narrator's choice of the term *muthos* for his speech (D60=B23.11; D46=B24.2; D157=B62.3; D6=B114.1; D73.245–6) does not yet have this significance and, on the basis of earlier usage, may instead indicate that it is an authoritative, weighty, public pronouncement, in keeping with his characterisation as a performer of wisdom.[196] Nevertheless, it is clear that, from the point of our earliest sources onwards, the Greeks had a distinct category of stories, mostly

[192] Laks (2004) 18–32; Laks (2005). [193] Primavesi (2008a).
[194] See n. 133 above for further objections to Primavesi's allegorical interpretation.
[195] On this development, see R. Fowler (2011), who cites further bibliography.
[196] For *muthos* as an authoritative, weighty pronouncement, see Martin (1989) 1–42; Lincoln (1999); R. Fowler (2011) 53.

traditional,[197] that were empirically unverifiable because they took place prior to living memory or outside of the mortal realm and that could serve a variety of functions, from pure entertainment, to the demonstration of moral principles, to the aetiological explanation of present-day natural phenomena and human customs.[198] The type of story that would later be referred to as 'myth' would have been distinctive even before it acquired a particular label and was closely associated with (if not the exclusive property of) Muse-inspired poetry.[199] Empedocles' poetry occupies the space of myth in this sense: both the cosmology and the daimonology concern events outside the realm of normal mortal experience, and both are told in Muse-inspired hexameters.

If Greek poetic 'myth' concerns events outside of the empirical scope of the audience, then Empedocles' narrator himself is a mythical character: he has seen first-hand the phenomena he describes (cf. D6=B114; D13=B117) that are outside his audience's experience and comes to the familiar world of Acragas (D4=B112) as an exile from the gods who has committed divine perjury in a pointedly similar manner to the gods of Hesiod's *Theogony* who forswear by the river Styx.[200] Although he invokes the Muse (D44=B3; D7=B131), he does not do so in order to draw on the resources of their divine knowledge but to ensure that his poetry is pious and beautiful.[201] Unlike the narrators of Hesiod's and Parmenides' poems, he does not have to rely on the Muses, or depart from the familiar realm of mortals, to speak authoritatively about this extraordinary world; rather, he comes to us from it. He is a god who interacts openly with the mortal Acragantines, a situation that contrasts starkly with, for instance, the opening of the *Catalogue of Women*, where such divine–mortal interactions

[197] Traditionality is often regarded as central to myth (e.g. in the oft-cited definition, Burkert [1979] 23: 'myth is a traditional tale with secondary, partial reference to something of collective importance'), but to make traditionality a necessary condition would be to exclude several stories that are usually considered myths, such as Plato's 'myths' and, probably, Hesiod's version of the myth of the races. This point is well-made by Bremmer (1987) and Csapo (2005) 8–9. On the development of the *muthos*/*logos* distinction, see Detienne (1986) and especially R. Fowler (2011).

[198] See similarly Buxton (1994) 12–17. For the category of 'myth' in the context of early Greek poetry, see also Detienne (1986) 22–62; Martin (1989); Morgan (2000) 20–4.

[199] Contrast (e.g.) Bremmer (1987) 7, 'in archaic Greece myths were the exclusive territory of poets', a statement which overlooks material culture. Nevertheless, as Hdt. 2.53 attests, the Homeric and Hesiodic poems became particularly authoritative sources for some myths. Dowden (1992) 6–8 explains the peculiar authority of Hesiodic and Homeric poetry as a source for myth as due to their Panhellenic qualities. Cf. also Morrison (2007) 78–9 on the lack of Muse-inspiration for non-mythic subject matter in Archaic poetry.

[200] On this relationship, see especially Most (2007). Note in particular the allusion to *Theog.* 793 in D10=B115.4, and to 800 in D10=B115.12.

[201] See n. 49 above.

are confined to the remote past (fr. 1; cf. also *Theog.* 535–7). By confronting us with a primary narrator from the world of myth, Empedocles breaks down the barrier between the world of the audience and the extraordinary world of mythical epic.

This end is also served by the redeployment of epic vocabulary to the familiar, natural world. The Homeric *hapax legomenon* ὀξυβελής, used significantly of the arrow with which Pandarus breaks the truce by shooting Menelaus (*Il.* 4.126),[202] is now applied to the sun (D125=B40, probably referring to its rays) and to the spines of hedgehogs (D197=B83 ὀξυβελεῖς χαῖται). The epithet 'late-born' is used by Homer for future generations of men, thus marking the chronological distance between characters and audience (*Il.* 3.353; *Od.* 1.302), but Empedocles uses it of pomegranates (ὀψίγονοι, D255=B80) because their fruit appears late in the year. The antlers of deer are μελίαι (D74.6), a word that properly refers to the 'ashen spears' that are the weapons of elite Homeric warriors. Furthermore, as we have noted, the cosmology accommodates the fantastical creatures of myth, such as the Minotaur. There is thus a continuum between the period of such fantastical creatures and that of the contemporary audience. This situation contrasts with the traditional notion that there has been an irrevocable break since the world of myth, when monsters of this kind were all slayed by Herakles and other heroes.[203] By eliding the normal barrier between the world of myth and the world of the audience, Empedocles mythologises and defamiliarises the familiar world, inviting us to apply the sort of reflective attention to his text and to the world that is normally reserved for the tales of epic singers (cf. *Theog.* 55).

Yet in addition to this respect in which Empedocles' poetry as a whole assumes mythical status, there is a further respect in which Laks and Primavesi are right to identify the story of the *daimon* more specifically as a myth, which would not apply to the cosmology. The narrator's story conforms to a mythical plot-type of exile and purification and concerns the actions and choices of anthropomorphic agents, whereas the cosmology concerns the inevitable movements of non-anthropomorphic (albeit personalised) divine forces. As I argued above (Section 4), the daimonology would count as a *muthos* in Aristotelian terms, but the cosmology would not. It is then, in a sense, a 'myth' within the wider *muthos* of the poem. Given this 'mythical' quality, I want to suggest that two traditional

[202] And thus re-establishing Trojan guilt at an early point in the poem. On the significance of this episode, see Taplin (1992) 103–9.

[203] Thus, explicitly, Eur. *HF* 696–700, a passage adapted at Seneca *HF* 882–92.

functions of Greek myth are relevant to the story in particular: as an aetiology for ritual practice and as an *exemplum* for moral lessons.

Whilst it would be an exaggeration to claim (as some have) that myth is always connected to ritual or vice versa, it is undeniable that, in our sources, myths are often used as explanations for ritual practices.[204] Two examples in particular bear close comparison to the story of Empedocles' narrator. First, Orestes' trial in the *Eumenides* serves as the model for trials at the Areopagus.[205] Like the Empedoclean narrator, Orestes needs to be purified of blood guilt and this purification involves a watershed moment in the history of the *polis*. Second, Prometheus' deception of Zeus, as told by Hesiod (*Theog.* 535–64), is the first instance of the sacrificial practice whereby the meat, wrapped in an ox-stomach, is eaten by the humans and the bones wrapped in fat are left for the gods.[206] The narrator, like Prometheus, commits a treacherous primordial crime involving the consumption of meat, one that indicates a reason to perform divine offerings in a certain way; but whereas, in Prometheus' case, the sacrifice sets a precedent to be followed, the story of the *daimon* is an example of what not to do: the crime of killing the animal demonstrates that offerings should be bloodless. Like these other examples, the story of the *daimon* concerns the choices of an anthropomorphic agent and is tied to a justification for a particular ritual practice, but unlike them it does not provide the origins for the custom. It is not as a result of the *daimon*'s actions that we should refrain from blood-sacrifice, since the law pre-existed his actions (D27a=B135). Explanation for this proposed custom is instead to be found in the cosmology: animals contain *daimones* just as we do and so should not be killed. By outlining particular rituals in a hexameter poem alongside a diachronic narrative that resembles certain aetiological myths, Empedocles draws attention to the manner in which they are explained, not by a mythological aetiology, but by a systematic cosmology.

But although the story of the *daimon* is not strictly aetiological, it serves a purpose typical of aetiological myths in functioning as an *exemplum* on which to model subsequent human behaviour. Aetiological myths are especially associated with this function through the 'genetic fallacy' (e.g. 'Prometheus originally made sacrifices in a certain way, so we should too'),

[204] On this much-discussed topic see, with respect to tragedy, Kowalzig (2006) and Romano (2012); with respect to Pindar, Rutherford (2011); and, more generally, Kowalzig (2007) 24–32.

[205] See Sommerstein (1989) 13–17.

[206] For other hexameter examples, note *Dem.* 265–7 with Richardson (1974) *ad loc.*; *Hermes* 105ff. with West (2003a) 13–14.

but of course, myths often illustrate the right or wrong course of action even when there is no such aetiological connection, as, for instance, when Achilles tells the myth of Niobe to encourage Priam to eat in spite of his grief (*Il.* 24.599–620). In this example, and in several other instances (aetiological or otherwise), a diachronic narrative, set in a past time, illustrates an ethical point of synchronic relevance to the speaker's addressee. Thus, in the *Works and Days*, Hesiod uses the myths of Prometheus and of the different races of men to illustrate particular ethical points. This latter example is of particular relevance to Empedocles, since he seems to have adapted it in his own golden age imagery. According to Vernant's celebrated analysis, Hesiod's diachronically successive races in fact represent types that are still present, a possibility supported by the fact that some of the imagery and vocabulary used in the myth recur later on in the poem to describe contemporary phenomena.[207] Likewise, the ideal society that Empedocles describes in D25=B128 functions, like Hesiod's golden race, as a description of a previous community that can again be realised, if only we behave in the correct way. More generally, Empedocles' story of the *daimon* in exile performs a paradigmatic function along the lines of these earlier examples: it is a particular diachronic narrative that illustrates ethical points of synchronic relevance to the addressee. The story justifies the commands against committing bloodshed and eating beans (D27a=B135; D29=B137; D30=B145) by providing an emotionally engaging example of the negative consequences of failing to follow these injunctions.

Both the cosmology and the daimonology, then, combine to promote the institution of new ritual practices by taking over the aetiological and exemplary roles traditionally performed by myth. *Pace* Primavesi, the story of the *daimon* is not an allegorical representation of the cosmic cycle, but illustrates a moral principle that is of direct importance to the citizens of Acragas (and, by implication, the citizens of other *poleis*), whilst at the same time prompting reflection (as Laks argues) on the nature of necessity and human agency. The fact that the story conforms to a recognisable pattern and is fashioned to serve these purposes may cast doubt over whether its author believed in its factual veracity, that is, over whether Empedocles actually believed himself to be a god in exile who had undergone this extraordinary experience.[208] Of course, this consideration could not provide conclusive proof one way or the other, but it is notable that the daimonic story may serve its illustrative and dialectical purposes regardless of the author's commitments to its factual accuracy, just as many of the

[207] See n. 137 above. [208] Cf. Griffith (1983) on the conventionality of Hesiod's persona.

embedded myths in Homer, Hesiod and Epinician do not seem to demand that we treat them as historical.[209] By contrast, the same could not be said of the cosmology: Empedocles seems to stake a stronger claim to the factual accuracy of this component, since his ethical instructions depend upon it and since it competes with other truth-candidates such as the cosmologies of the earlier Presocratics. With the daimonic narrative, what is more important is that the story illustrates a moral point in a manner that is emotionally relatable.

b Emotions and Aesthetics

The 'myth' of the *daimon* illustrates the value of Empedocles' ethical injunctions precisely because it is an engrossing and emotionally affecting narrative. We observed above that D29=B137, involving the image of a father sacrificing his son and children eating their parents, recalls especially the plots of Attic tragedy. In the *daimon*'s urgent exclamation at D76.5–16, he retrospectively wishes that he had been destroyed prior to having committed an act of bloodshed ('Alas that the pitiless day did not destroy me earlier / Before I contrived terrible deeds about food with my claws!', 5–6), crying, in true tragic fashion, *oimoi*! These and further details can be taken to suggest that narrative of the *daimon* is designed to elicit the characteristically tragic emotions of pity and fear that would become ratified in Aristotle's *Poetics* (1449b27–8). Although Aristotle is a later source and although he famously excludes Empedocles from the category of poetry, he can nevertheless be taken as evidence for the sorts of responses that Empedocles' verses could have elicited roughly a century earlier. This is because Aristotle articulates and systematises traditional notions that are evident in earlier Greek texts.[210] The notion that pity and fear are appropriate to tragedy is already implicit in the practice of the tragedians themselves and may ultimately derive from Homer.[211] By the time of

[209] On this topic in Hesiod's *Works and Days*, see Currie (2012).

[210] Aristotle makes explicit his 'endoxic' method of selecting the best widely held views at *Eth. Nic.* 7.5.1145b2–7, on which see e.g. Shields (2013) 27–32. For a defence of the (critical) use of Aristotle as a guide to interpreting fifth-century texts, see Heath (1987) 2–4, and (specifically with respect to the tragic emotions) 11–17.

[211] For earlier conceptions of pity and fear as appropriate responses to poetry, note Gorg. (*Helena*) D24=B11.8–9; Pl. *Ion* 535b–e, *Phdr.* 268c; Andocides 4.23; Isocrates 4.168 (with Halliwell [2002] 212–14 on these latter two). The lineage of this idea is already evident in Homer, *Od.* 14.388–9; Shankman (1983) persuasively argues that it is a mark of Antinous' moral deficiency that he does not respond with such emotions to Odysseus' story at *Od.* 17.415–44. See also Rutherford (1982) for pity in the *Iliad*.

Empedocles' composition, they were well established as the responses appropriate to scenarios such as D29=B137.

The story of the *daimon* conforms to Aristotelian principles of tragedy in certain further respects. The narrator's exclamation at D76.5–16 is reminiscent in particular of scenes of tragic *anagnorisis* where the protagonist has realised too late that he has committed a monstrous action.[212] The narrator has fallen from good to bad fortune through his own error (cf. *Poet.* 13.1452b28–1452b39). For both Empedocles and Aristotle, the reception of the text is tied to the process of *katharsis* or 'purification' (cf. D44=B3.2, D257=B110.2; Arist. *Poet.* 1.1449b27–8). This conceptualisation of literary response as *katharsis* probably stems, in the case of both authors, from an association with ritual purification.[213] Aristotle even attributed tragedies to Empedocles (fr. 73 Janko=D.L.8.57=Empedocles P25=A1). Diogenes Laertius reports that this claim was already disputed in antiquity and, as Janko notes, since the *Suda* ascribes twenty-four tragedies to the philosopher's namesake grandson, the latter's work was probably mistakenly attributed to the former.[214] But the tragic features of Empedocles' own poetry (especially the characteristically tragic scenario of D29=B137) could have facilitated this error. Indeed, one reason why Aristotle singles out Empedocles (rather than Xenophanes or Parmenides) for exclusion from the category of poetry (*Poet.* 1.1447b) may have been precisely because otherwise, on the basis of Aristotle's account of tragedy, we might have assumed that Empedocles' work fitted the bill.

Aristotle articulates a further dimension to tragic pity and fear that is of particular relevance to Empedocles: they provoke an awareness of shared vulnerability between character and spectator.[215] For Aristotle, pity depends on the sense that we too might suffer what afflicts those pitied (*Rhet.* 2.8.1385b13–33, 1386a25–9); tragic fear also derives from the feeling that similar things to the events onstage might happen to us (*Poetics* 13.1453a4–6; cf. *Rhetoric* 1386b27–9). Again, these ideas have been traced to much earlier poetic texts.[216] If we accept Aristotle's definitions of pity

[212] This point is made by Gagné (2006) 95–6. Cf. esp. Soph. *OT* 1307–8; 1316–18 (with Cairns [1993] 218, 'his pain, which is so vividly presented, lies less in fear of disgrace than in his knowledge of what he has done'); *Ant.* 1271–6; *OC* 1254–66; Eur. *HF* 1146–52.

[213] For this interpretation of Aristotelian *katharsis*, see Ford (2016) and, more briefly, Halliwell (1998) 194. Aristotle uses religious ecstasy (*enthousiasmos*) to illustrate musical *katharsis* at *Politics* 8.7.1341b32–1342a18.

[214] Janko (2010) 538.

[215] For Aristotelian pity as based upon a notion of shared vulnerability, see Halliwell (1998) 175–84.

[216] See Rutherford (1982) 158–60; Stanford (1983) 21–9; Halliwell (2002) 207–33; Munteanu (2012) esp. 181–207; Cairns (2015) 86–7. For earlier examples where shared vulnerability is implicit, note e.g. *Il.* 24. 485–551; Soph. *Ajax* 121–6, *OT* 1194, 1211, 1216–21, 1286, 1296, 1299, 1303, 1347.

and fear, Empedocles' incitement of these emotions invites comparison between the circumstances of the audience and those of the narrator. Initially, this comparison is one of contrast, with the narrator (at least seemingly) a god speaking to mortal addressees (D4=B112), but the contrast is inverted when we learn that that narrator is an exile supplicating those who are 'inexperienced in ill' (D10=B115; D4=B112.3), a situation that contrasts pointedly with his own. Ultimately, however, we must come to the chilling realisation that we ourselves (if, like most ancient Greeks, we are meat-eaters) are in the same predicament as the narrator and have committed crimes that contravene the immutable laws of the cosmos. Thus, it is not only the case that we *might* suffer what the narrator has experienced; we ourselves undergo an *anagnorisis* similar to that of Sophocles' Oedipus (of the *Oedipus Tyrannus*), that we are in fact desperately polluted and in need of purification. The world we inhabit is one of 'anger' and 'slaughter' (D24=B121); we are a 'wretched' and 'utterly unblessed tribe of mortals' who are 'born of strife and wailing' (D17=B124). As with Oedipus, it is not that our circumstances have changed, but that we realise that those circumstances are far worse than we ever suspected them to be. The ideal experience of the audience, then, replicates a further tragic *topos*, that to learn is to suffer.[217] Indeed, the narrator's statement that the truth 'is very painful for men, and the onrush of conviction is hard for the mind' (D6=B114) is a variant of this *topos*.

If this interpretation of the emotionally affecting quality of Empedocles' story is accepted, it can help us to understand its exemplary function. Douglas Cairns draws on the resources of cognitive science to explain the emotive and exemplary aspects of certain Greek narratives: stories, by facilitating an audience's imaginative engagement with the lives of others, build empathy and can crystallise norms in the patterns of narratives and the emotional responses they warrant.[218] Empedocles' story of the *daimon* can be read in these terms: by conforming to certain familiar patterns (exile and purification; human sacrifice and unintentional cannibalism) it serves to crystallise those patterns and the emotional responses they elicit (pity, fear), but it does so in the service of building empathy with non-human beings (sacrificial animals and even plants into which the narrator has been incarnated). More simply put, Empedocles presents the killing of animals as an instance of the traditional mythical patterns of human sacrifice and cannibalism and so worthy of the emotions of pity and fear warranted by

[217] E.g. Aesch. *Ag.* 177; Soph. *OT* 544–5, *Ant.* 1272; Eur. *HF* 1115, *Bacch.* 1113. Cf. Hdt. 1.207.1.
[218] Cairns (2014) 104–5.

such narratives. Traditional narrative patterns thus illustrate novel precepts (we should not eat meat or beans), which are presented as an entailment of traditional principles (cannibalism is taboo; murderers should be ritually purified; gods deserve piety). Empedocles uses hexameter poetry for its traditional purpose of eliciting emotions, but this purpose serves the further didactic end of grafting new customs onto well-established ethical principles.

Yet to focus only on the tragic qualities of the narrative of the *daimon* would be to omit a large part of the surviving evidence of the poem. It seems likely that this narrative of the *daimon* functioned as a preface to the cosmology (just as Parmenides' proem prefaces the goddess' speech).[219] If this structure is correct, then through the narrative of the *daimon* we are made bitterly aware of our mortal pollutedness before we are granted an awe-inspiring, god's-eye perspective on the cosmos. As was the case with Parmenides' *Doxa*, in the physical fragments, we are granted a view that would normally be inaccessible to mortals. A good example occurs at D75=B35.14–17:

> αἶψα δὲ θνήτ' ἐφύοντο, τὰ πρὶν μάθον ἀθάνατ' εἶναι,
> ζωρά τε τὰ πρὶν ἄκρητα διαλλάξαντα κελεύθους.
> τῶν δέ τε μισγομένων χεῖτ' ἔθνεα μυρία θνητῶν,
> παντοίαις ἰδέησιν ἀρηρότα, θαῦμα ἰδέσθαι.

> Swiftly they became mortal, the things which before learned to be immortal
> And mixed, things which before were unmixed, exchanging their paths.
> And from them, as they mixed, poured forth countless tribes of mortals,
> Fitted with all kinds of forms, a wonder to behold.

The passage is a formal *tour de force*, featuring artful antitheses ('mortal . . . immortal' . . . 'mixed . . . unmixed') and repetitions that illustrate the sheer number of new forms produced (τὰ πρίν . . . τὰ πρίν), culminating in the chiasmus of line 16 (μισγομένων χεῖτ' ἔθνεα μυρία θνητῶν). It is as if the poem itself were 'fitted with all kinds of forms, a wonder to behold'. But although these phenomena may be a 'wonder to behold', no member of Empedocles' audience could actually have beheld them. To recall such a wondrous sight (according to Empedoclean principles) would require either a memory of one's past incarnations or the status of being a 'long-lived god'. Throughout the physical fragments, we are granted this god's-eye perspective on the cosmos, in all its details, both on a macroscopic and on a microscopic level. Porter has justifiably described this level of detail as

[219] See n. 158 above.

a sublime 'poetics of excessiveness'.[220] As we observed in the case of Parmenides' *Doxa*, the perspective is comparable to the Iliadic shield of Achilles – which itself would later be allegorised as representing Empedocles' cosmology –[221] where the level of detail was so astounding that only gods or the godlike Achilles could bear to look at it. Again, the experience of initiates into the Eleusinian mysteries seems comparable: an initially terrifying experience ultimately culminates in an awe-inspiring, sublime vision.[222] The emotional trajectory, and the imagery of initiation, tender the possibility that we can purify ourselves of our mortal pollution and acquire a divine status.

Again, Conte's observation of the *De rerum natura* seems applicable, that the text 'generates a sense of inadequacy in whoever happens to contemplate it; then it elevates the reader's mind to a higher level of understanding and fills him with enthusiasm'.[223] Empedocles' poem generates a sense of our inadequacy (both ethically and epistemologically, cf. D17=B124, D42=B2) as fallen mortals, but then places us on a divine vantage point from which we can imagine the benefits of regaining our purified godhood. But whereas, in Lucretius, the attainment of this quasi-divine status is a psychological shift, an alteration of our beliefs and attitudes, for Empedocles, through changing our ritual habits, we may actually become, ultimately, *theoi*. The divine perspective on the cosmos that Empedocles provides thus offers a foretaste of the sort of status we might attain if we follow the instructions and regain our godhood so that we lack the limitations and miseries of mortals.

c Textual Visions

As with Parmenides, there is a marked visual dimension to this fabulous experience that can be regarded as an aspect of the poem's evocation of mystic initiation, but also takes on a more specific significance within the context of author's philosophy. We noted in the Introduction that a frequently observed characteristic of early Greek song is its capacity to turn its listeners into spectators, exposing them to a particular perspective

[220] Porter (2016) 419.

[221] See Hardie (1985) 15. This interpretation stems from the Hellenistic allegorical interpretations preserved in Heraclitus' *Homeric Problems* and in Eustathius.

[222] Gagné (2006) 98–102 relates the fear elicited by Empedocles' poetry to the fear experienced in mystic initiations, but without commenting on the further detail that both culminate in a sublime vision.

[223] Conte (1994) 28, quoted in Chapter 2 Section 4e above with respect to Parmenides.

on the world. Empedocles stresses that his poetry exercises this capacity by repeatedly using visual language of his verbal account (D44=B3.9; D77a=B21.1; D257=B110.2; D74.326=B76.3; D73.292–3, 300). This visual language forms part of the figuration of the response to the text as a process of initiation: Pausanias' 'initiation' consists in being granted a special 'vision' (cf. D257=B110.2) of the broad-scale workings of the cosmos (e.g. D75=B35.17), just as initiation into the mysteries at Eleusis culminated in the 'viewing' of a certain spectacle in the *Anaktoron/anaktora* (see Chapter 2 Section 4f above). But this visual language also carries a more specific significance, given the nature of Empedocles' cosmology. By contrast with Parmenides, Empedocles accords a greater role to the senses as a means of accessing the underlying nature of reality, a contrast that is marked by pointed allusions.[224] Yet the evidence of our senses alone is still not sufficient to grasp a true understanding of the world: the subject matter of the poem is 'neither seen nor heard by men / nor grasped with the mind' (D42=B2.7–8). At D73.252=B17.21, the narrator commands the student to 'See [Love] with your mind, and do not sit stunned by your eyes', that is, to visualise an item that is literally invisible. The poem reveals to us an image of the wider workings of the cosmos but will ideally also grant us the ability to see in a more penetrating manner than conventional seeing, so that we can identify the underlying elemental constitution of manifest phenomena.

This sort of penetrating vision is made more explicit at D73.291–300:

σπεῦ]δε δ' ὅπως μὴ μοῦνον ἀν' οὔατα [μῦθος ἵκηται,
ἠδέ] μευ ἀμφὶς ἐόντα κλύων [ν]ημερτ[έα δέρκευ·
δεί]ξω σοι καὶ ἀν' ὅσσε ἵνα μείζονι σώμ[ατι κύρει,
π]ρῶτον μὲν ξύνοδόν τε διάπτυξίν τ̣ε̣ γενέθλης,
ὅ̣σ̣[σ]α τε νῦν ἔτι λοιπὰ πέλει τούτοιο τ[όκοιο,
τοῦ̣το μὲν [ἂν] θηρῶν ὀριπλάγκτων ἀγ[ρότερ' εἴδη,
τοῦτο δ' ἀν' ἀ[νθρώ]πῳν δίδυμον φύμ̣α̣, [τοῦτο δ' ἀν' ἀνθέων

[224] In D44=B3 to Parmenides D8.1–6=B7. Both fragments mention the three senses of vision, hearing and taste as potential means to provide a 'path' (πόρος ἐστὶ νοῆσαι, D44=B3.12; ὁδοῦ, ὁδὸν, D8.2–3=B7.2–3), and in each case there is a list of negative commands followed by a concise positive command connected with an adversative δέ. Empedocles' command contrasts pointedly with that of Parmenides: Pausanias is not told to reject the senses but, instead, to use them in a balanced way; for Parmenides, the senses head down the road of what-is-not, a road from which the youth must withhold his 'understanding' (νόημα), whereas Empedocles' senses are all implicitly 'routes for understanding' (πόροι νοῆσαι). The command νόει δ' ἦι δῆλον ἕκαστον, 'understand how each thing is clear', bids the student to perform an action that would be impossible to perform correctly according to Parmenides' epistemology, where only one thing is properly there to be the object of νοεῖν. The allusion to Parmenides, then, underlines Empedocles' defence of the senses as a means of achieving understanding.

ῥιζοφόρων γέννημα καὶ ἀμπελοβάμ[ονα βότρυν.
ἐκ τῶν ἀψευδῆ κόμισαι φρενὶ δείγματα μ[ύθων·
ὄψει γὰρ ξύνοδόν τε διάπτυξίν τε γενέθληL ς J 300

And make an effort so that [my speech?] does not only [reach?] your ears,
[and] hearing from me the things around us [see] unerring things;
I will show you even by your eyes where they meet a larger body,
First the coming-together and the unfolding of a generation,
And as many things as now remain from this [brood][225] 295
Firstly, the one among the wild [forms] of mountain-wandering beasts,
Then the one among the double race of human beings, [and then among the]
Race of root-bearing [flowers] and vine-climbing [grapes.]
From these bear to your mind the unlying revelations of my words;
For you will see the coming-together and the unfolding of a generation. 300
(Text from LM, based largely on Martin and Primavesi [1999])

These lines have sometimes been taken as an appeal to empirical evidence: Pausanias, it is held, should not merely accept the word of the narrator, but judge by the evidence of his senses.[226] I suspect, however, that the situation is not quite so similar to modern scientific methods. Our verdict on this point depends partly upon our supplementation of the gaps in the papyrus, especially line 292. If we accept Martin and Primavesi's suggestions for the line (reprinted above), the power of vision afforded to Pausanias will be gained by hearing the words of the poem. It is not the case that Pausanias is to see certain things and then find confirmation of Empedocles' words; rather, Empedocles' words will enable Pausanias to see in a certain way, that is, to see the objects of his experience for what they really are, compounds of the four elements, governed by the forces of Love and Strife, at some stage in the long-term cosmic cycle. Against this view, Sedley has proposed the following supplement and translation:[227]

εἰ δέ] μευ ἀμφὶς ἐόντα κλύων [ν]ημερτ[ὲς ἐπόψει
If, as you listen to me, you look unerringly upon the things around you

Even this, however, need not suggest an appeal to empirical evidence, since it could equally be translated as 'if, hearing about the things around you from me, you look unerringly', thus still presenting the text as the instrument by which the student will achieve this unerring vision. However we choose to supplement 292, the fact that the visual language in this passage is not a proto-scientific appeal to empirical evidence is confirmed by the

[225] Probably, the brood that has come to be since the last Sphere and has not yet disintegrated in this period of increasing Strife (*contra* Sedley [2007] 36–7).
[226] Sedley (2007) 35–8. [227] Sedley (2007) 35–6.

narrator's promise to 'show' Pausanias the 'coming-together and unfolding of a generation', for this phenomenon would normally be impossible for a mortal to 'see' in any simple, literal sense. The speech itself affords the relevant visual experience, as the expression (which depends on a more secure supplementation) 'revelations of my words' (299) implies.[228] Through hearing Empedocles' words, Pausanias will 'see' the cosmos, in a way in which mortals do not typically see.

A specific example of one of these 'revelations' is preserved in D74>B76, a fragment now expanded thanks to the Strasbourg papyrus:

τοῦτο μὲν ἐν κόγχαισι θαλασσονόμοις βαρυνώτοις,
ἠδ' ἐν πε]τ̣ραίοισι κα[
ἔνθ' ὄψει χθ̣όνα χρωτὸς ὑπέρτατα ναιετάουσαν·
θώρηξ δ' αὖ]τε κραταιν[ώ]των α[
ναὶ μὴν κηρύκων τε λιθορρίνων χελύων τε
ὄστρακα κα]ὶ μ̣ε̣λ̣ί̣α̣ι̣ κ̣εραῶν ἐλά[φων ὀριπλάγκτων.
ἀλλὰ οὐκ ἂν τελέσαι̣μ]ι̣ λέγων σύμ̣[παντα γένεθλα

This, in sea-grazing, heavy-backed shells,
And in r]ocky[
There you will see earth inhabiting the uppermost parts of the flesh;
And, once more, the breast-plate] of strong-backed [
Yes indeed, and of the stone-skinned trumpet-shell, and of turtles
The shell and] the ashen spears of the horns of [mountain-wandering] stags
But I would not finish] telling of [all the species]

Pausanias will 'see' the 'earth' on the back of shelled animals, such as seashells and turtles. Whilst these animals can of course be part of normal visual experience, it is only because of Empedocles' instruction that Pausanias will be able to see the 'earth' on them, a detail that, presumably, would have escaped the mortals dismissed in D42=B2. The vivid experience of the poem enables us to 'see' the elemental constitution underlying the phenomena surrounding us.

In this way, Empedocles, like traditional hexameter poetry, transports his audience away from the *hic et nunc*, a process that is facilitated by the fact that he portrays the world in the defamiliarised language of epic. In D74 the stags' horns are 'ashen spears' and, possibly, the animals in line 4 have a 'breast-plate'. But rather than transporting us into the imagined distant past of myth, the poem leads us to a vision of the regular structures that govern present-day

[228] Note also how the sage of D38=B129 (probably Pythagoras) was easily able to 'see' (λεύσσεσκεν) the things across ten and twenty lifetimes: this special power of seeing here is the result, rather than the cause, of a correct understanding of the universe.

sensible phenomena. The fact that Pausanias is to learn to 'see' in a special way suggests that the audience, too, should acquire this power, once they have heard the poem. Through our immersive experience of Empedocles' vivid poetic world, we are to attune our senses so that we are then able to see the elements which underlie the various phenomena of our sensory experience. We no longer merely see tortoise- or snail-shells or antlers, but different portions of indestructible earth. Indeed, like the student of Parmenides' poem, we are taught to identify what is constant in an ostensibly changing world (D73.240–4; D19=B26.12). The defamiliarising, emotionally affective and vividly visual aspects of the poem thus co-operate to modify the audience's attitudes and perceptions. As with Parmenides, a further component to this process is the manner in which the poem invites a critical reflection on the way in which certain textual details relate to reality.

d Interpreting the Text, Understanding the World

In Chapter 2, I argued that Parmenides adopts a conspicuously symbolic form of discourse as a strategy to prepare his audience to apply a penetrating interpretation to their sensory experience: the poem enigmatically represents a deeper meaning, while the shifting variety of our sensory experience is an imperfect likeness of unchanging true reality. Empedocles deploys the same tactic: just as we are to identify a deeper symbolic meaning beneath the obvious sense of his language, so we are to look beneath the surface of the manifold phenomena presented to us by our senses in order to identify the six permanent entities. He most obviously demands this mode of interpretation in his use of divine names:

> τέσσαρα γὰρ πάντων ῥιζώματα πρῶτον ἄκουε·
> Ζεὺς ἀργὴς Ἥρη τε φερέσβιος ἠδ' Ἀιδωνεύς
> Νῆστίς θ', ἣ δακρύοις τέγγει κρούνωμα βρότειον.
>
> Hear first the four roots of all things;
> Bright Zeus and life-giving Hera and Aidoneus
> And Nestis who wets the mortal spring with her tears.
>
> (D57=B6)

The four names conventionally refer to anthropomorphic deities and the anthropomorphism of these figures is accentuated by the fact that they are paired as two married couples: Zeus and Hera; Aidoneus/Hades and Nestis, who appears to have been a Sicilian goddess akin to Persephone.[229] With the

[229] Thus Kingsley (1995) 348–56; Picot (2008b).

exception of Nestis' identification with water, there is disagreement over precisely which deity corresponds to which element,[230] but this question does not concern me so much as the precise respect in which these names relate to their referents. Scholars have sometimes described the fragment as an allegory on the assumption that the anthropomorphism is intended figuratively.[231] On this view, Empedocles uses Nestis to symbolise the cosmic mass of water, but without positing the existence of an actual, human-shaped deity of that name. This approach is supported by the parallel of D93=B134, where the pointedly non-anthropomorphic 'holy mind' was probably referred to as Apollo. Certainly, Empedocles uses traditional divine names in an untraditional manner. We are to read beneath the anthropomorphic connotations of Zeus, Hera and the rest to identify a cosmic mass, just as allegorical interpreters such as Theagenes and the Derveni commentator do with the divine names in Homer and the Orphic Theogony.[232] But rather than seeing this unconventional usage as intended figuratively, it is perhaps better thought of as a redefinition: Zeus and Hera still exist in Empedocles' cosmos, but they are actually identified with, rather than figuratively representative of, the cosmic masses to which they correspond.

The apparent rationale behind Empedocles' enigmatic language confirms this understanding of his divine names. The anthropomorphic names are the terms used to refer to the elements from a mortal perspective. So much is evinced by D73.251–5=B17.20–4:

> καὶ Φιλότης ἐν τοῖσιν, ἴση μῆκός τε πλάτος τε·
> τὴν σὺ νόωι δέρκευ, μηδ' ὄμμασιν ἧσο τεθηπώς·
> ἥτις καὶ θνητοῖσι νομίζεται ἔμφυτος ἄρθροις,
> τῆι τε φίλα φρονέουσι καὶ ἄρθμια ἔργα τελοῦσι,
> Γηθοσύνην καλέοντες ἐπώνυμον ἠδ' Ἀφροδίτην·
>
> And Love among them, equal in length and breadth.
> See her with your mind, and do not sit stunned by your eyes;
> She who is also considered to be inborn in mortal limbs,
> By whom they think thoughts of love and accomplish fitting deeds,

[230] I follow Kingsley (1995) 13–48 in seeing Zeus as the air, Hera as the earth and Hades as fire (with Nestis more obviously standing for water); an interpretation also followed by Willi (2008) 227–8. Cerri (2001) agrees that Hera is the earth but argues that Zeus is fire and Hades is the air. The ancient evidence is divided: Diogenes Laertius (8.76) and Hippolytus (*Haer.* 7.29.4) claim that Aidoneus (Hades) is Air, Hera Earth and Zeus Fire; an alternative identification going back to Theophrastus and adopted by the Stoics treats Aidoneus as Earth and Hera as Air (see Aët. 1.3.20; Philodem. *Piet.* 2, 63; Cic. *Nat. D.* 2.66, Plut. *De Is. et Os.* 363d; Men. Rhet. 1.5.2).

[231] The fragment is understood as allegorical in this sense by Primavesi (2005), (2008a).

[232] On Theagenes and the Derveni commentator, see Introduction Section 2 above.

Calling her Joy by name and Aphrodite.

Mortals refer to the feeling in their bodies as 'Joy' or 'Aphrodite', when in fact, it is the non-anthropomorphic cosmic Love.[233] Nevertheless, Empedocles will repeatedly refer to cosmic Love using the mortal name 'Aphrodite'. An explanation of this sort of practice, this time with reference to the mortal terms for 'birth' and 'death', occurs in D53=B8 and D54=B9:

ἄλλο δέ τοι ἐρέω· φύσις οὐδενὸς ἔστιν ἁπάντων
θνητῶν, οὐδέ τις οὐλομένου θανάτοιο τελευτή,
ἀλλὰ μόνον μίξις τε διάλλαξίς τε μιγέντων
ἔστι, φύσις δ' ἐπὶ τοῖς ὀνομάζεται ἀνθρώποισιν.

And I will tell you another thing: there is no creation of any at all
of mortal things, nor is there any end of accursed death,
but there is only mixture and exchange of the mixed things
but creation is the name given to them by mortals. (D53=B8)

οἱ δ' ὅτε μὲν κατὰ φῶτα μιγέντ' εἰς αἰθέρ' ἴ<κωνται>
ἢ κατὰ θηρῶν ἀγροτέρων γένος ἢ κατὰ θάμνων
ἠὲ κατ' οἰωνῶν, τότε μὲν τὸ <λέγουσι> γενέσθαι,
εὖτε δ' ἀποκρινθῶσι, τὸ δ' αὖ δυσδαίμονα πότμον·
ἣ θέμις <οὐ>[234] καλέουσι, νόμωι δ' ἐπίφημι καὶ αὐτός.

And they, when these things into the air mixed together in the form of men,
or in the race of wild beasts or of bushes
or of birds, then that being born,
but when they disintegrate, they call that ill-starred fate.
They do speak rightly, but I myself assent to the custom. (D54=B9)

In D53=B8 mortals typically use φύσις, 'birth' or 'creation' for what is in fact μίξις, or 'mixture'. We can also assume that the 'end of death' (θανάτοιο τελευτή) is a conventional 'name' applied by mortals for what is really 'exchange' of the elements that have been mixed. The difference between the mortal 'name' and what these phenomena actually 'are' implies that the mortal terminology is in some way inadequate, but this situation is further complicated by D54=B9. I reproduce above the lacunose fragment with its most commonly accepted supplements, according to which the mortal naming practices are 'not right'. This negative characterisation is far from certain, but in any case, the narrator 'assents' to the

[233] Cf. Xenophanes D39=B32. That the shape of cosmic Love is unlike humans is suggested by D75=B35.

[234] This is Wyttenbach's supplement, which has been accepted by most editors (including Diels-Kranz), but Bollack (1965–9) supplements γε, rendering a positive sense, and has now been followed by LM.

convention of referring to death as δυσδαίμονα πότμον, 'ill-starred fate', even though the process is actually a more specific one of 'disintegration'. As we saw with Parmenides' poem, the difference in terms reflects a distinction between divine and mortal perspectives. The Empedoclean narrator is himself a god of sorts (D4=B112.4; D60=B23.11) who must contend with a mortal audience (D42=B2; D44=B3.6–7), and the conventional terms are specifically those applied by mortals (ἀνθρώποισιν, D53=B8.4).[235] These fragments thus develop the traditional distinction between divine and mortal language.[236] The divine narrator uses conventional, mortal terms in spite of the fact that they may obscure the actual nature of the phenomena to which they refer: 'death', for Empedocles, given his doctrine of metempsychosis, is not really the end of conscious existence as the term may imply. But by interpreting the text in the right sort of way and identifying the processes that underlie these terms, we can acquire a divine understanding of the world.

Given this explanation of his use of mortal terms and given that 'Aphrodite' is specified as such a term in D73, we can reasonably infer that the names of the gods in D57=B6 are used in a similar manner: as misleading words that mortals conventionally use to refer to certain phenomena, but which Empedocles will nevertheless use himself. To regard this usage as allegorical or figurative is somewhat misleading. Mortal names contain an element of truth that can be accessed through correct interpretation, but it is one of which the mortals themselves are unaware. In Empedocles' cosmos, the traditional, anthropomorphic names for the six permanent entities are inaccurate insofar as they imply a human-like shape, but not insofar as they imply a human-like personality.[237] According to D257=B110.10, 'all things have intelligence and a share in thought' (πάντα . . . φρόνησιν ἔχειν καὶ νώματος αἶσαν). The elements, then, like all things in Empedocles' universe, have mental faculties. Thus, at D75=B35.6, they come together 'willingly' (θελημά, D75=B35.6).[238] Aphrodite – who is in fact, the cosmic force of Love – is said to 'fit things together' (D61=B71.4); she 'fashioned eyes' (D213=B86, ἔπηξεν), and 'fitted them together with bolts of affection' (D214=B87, γόμφοις ἀσκήσασα

[235] On the implicit division between divine and mortal language in Empedocles, see Inwood (2001) 37–8 and especially Willi (2008) 230–63.

[236] Chapter 2 n. 19 above.

[237] In addition to the anthropomorphic names for the four elements at D57=B6 and the references to Love as 'Aphrodite' (D101=B22.5; D159=B66.1; D213=B86.1; D214=B87.1; D73.255=B17.24) or 'Kypris' (D25=B128.2), Strife seems to be referred to as 'Ares' at D25=B128.1.

[238] For the four elements as personal deities, see e.g. Rangos (2012) 319 and Rowett (2016) esp. 84–8, who argues that the elements are divine, personal agents. Note also Arist. *Gen. corr.* 2.6.333b20–2.

καταστόργοις). As Kypris, she 'moistens earth in water' and 'gives it to fire to rule over' as she 'busies herself over forms' (D199=B73).[239] There is such a thing as Aphrodite, it is just that she is in fact the cosmic force of Love.

The divine names are not the only characteristically poetic feature that Empedocles invites us to reinterpret in light of his cosmology. Often, it seems to be specifically poetic expressions that are given a new significance: the 'mortal' expressions in D53=B8 and D54=B9, 'end of death' (θανάτοιο τελευτή) and 'ill-starred fate' (δυσδαίμονα πότμον), are rather poetic locutions (cf. [Hes.] *Sc.* 357; Soph. *OT* 1302) that are replaced with the more prosaic διαλλαξίς, so that we are encouraged to interpret the poetic language in terms of the 'scientific' cosmology. Traditional hexameter epithets are deployed in new contexts, illustrating the common origin of humans, animals and plants.[240] Trees are given the personifying epithet 'lovely-haired' (δένδρεσιν ἠυκόμοισιν, D36=B127.2), usually used of goddesses and ladies (*Il.* 1.36; Hes. *Theog.* 241; Pind. *Ol.* 6.91 – they also 'lay eggs', ὠιοτοκεῖ, D254=B79). As we noted above, pomegranates are referred to as 'late-born' (ὀψίγονοι, D255=B80) because their fruit appears late in the year, but the epithet is used by Homer of humans (*Il.* 3.353, *Od.* 1.302). The narrator describes the mind of his addressee as ἔλλοψ in D258=B5, an epithet of disputed meaning normally used of fish (e.g. Hes. [*Sc.*] 212, either meaning 'scaly' or 'dumb', see LSJ *s.v.*). What at first may appear as a figurative metaphor, then, highlights the common origins of tenor and vehicle, for example, of humans and plants.[241] Even characteristically epic formal features acquire a new meaning. As is well known, Empedocles self-consciously uses repetitions, a salient feature of orally derived epic, to illustrate the iterations in the cosmic cycle (D73>B17, D45=B25), and his extended similes, another distinctive epic technique, are in fact analogies, demonstrating common underlying processes for both familiar and unfamiliar phenomena (D60=B23; D215=B84; D201=B100).[242] Empedocles defamiliarises the world of the audience's experience by presenting it in the forms and language characteristic of mythical epic. The

[239] Note also D101=B22. 5, things are 'made similar' (ὁμοιωθέντα) by Aphrodite. See Sedley (2007) 52f. for a strongly personal reading of Love. Contrast Curd (2013a).

[240] As Gemelli Marciano (1990) 36–7, 52–4, 85, 96 and Rosenfeld-Löffler (2006) 18–21 demonstrate.

[241] A point made by Rosenfeld-Löffler (2006) 18–21.

[242] Hershbell (1968) catalogues the repetitions and traditional epithets, seeing them as evidence that Empedocles was an 'oral poet'; whilst it can scarcely be denied that Empedocles' poetry was designed for oral performance, this argument misses the point that these traditional features illustrate particular features of the cosmology and so are not merely an expedient for oral composition. On Empedocles' mimetic use of repetition, see Graham (1988) 303–7. On the similes, see esp. O'Brien (1970) and Gheerbrant (2017) 271–386.

fact that the content of his poem is not the distant world of epic but, among other things, the familiar world of the audience invites them to apply an interpretation to the world that is analogous to their interpretation of the poetry.

6 Conclusions: Empedocles in the History of Greek Poetry and Poetics

In Section 5 above I have tried to show that Empedocles' use of verse is not a feature that can be explained by a single cause and then swiftly discarded. Rather, his text works as poetry in a more essential sense. It is designed to have a particular pragmatic effect on the audience, through the emotional force of its narratives and imagery and through the penetrating, subtextual interpretation it provokes. The 'truths' of Empedocles' poetry are not always to be identified with the obvious meaning of the text: some of the propositional statements – that the 'palace of Zeus' receives the exile (D12=B142) or even that things 'are born' (D54=B9) – are not to be taken at face value. In self-consciously exploiting the distinction between the literal sense of the text on the one hand and the underlying cosmology on the other, Empedocles approaches an articulation of the notion that poetry creates a self-contained image of the world, analogous to the visual arts (cf. D60=B23) and valued, not for its historical accuracy, but for its symbolic meaning and emotive force.

We saw a similar distinction at work in Parmenides' division between the world of the *Doxa* and the world of the *Aletheia*. Although Empedocles grants more authority to the world of the senses than Parmenides had done, he maintained the principle that the objects of secure, divine knowledge are unchanging and small in number. Both authors thus isolate the world of the senses as distinct from secure reality but interpretable in such a manner as to lead to it. This epistemological point foreshadows (and in Parmenides' case directly influenced) Plato's theory of the forms, a theory which would provide the epistemological basis for his attacks on poetry as a mimetic representation, 'at third remove from that which is' (τριττὰ ἀπέχοντα τοῦ ὄντος, *Resp.* 10.599a). The fact that Parmenides and Empedocles make this epistemological point in verse and, more specifically, the fact they depict the world of the senses as analogous to the world of poetry suggest that they also regarded their theories of knowledge as having consequences for the nature and function of poetry. In short, Parmenides and Empedocles foreshadow Plato in treating an epistemological issue as an issue of

poetics. In Empedocles' case, a further point of overlap with Plato is the conceptualisation of poetry as an artisanal product, analogous to painting. Yet in contrast with both Parmenides' *Doxa* and the Platonic views expressed in the *Republic*, Empedocles stresses the positive dimensions of both the world of the senses and of poetry as means to guide us to the unchanging principles that underlie them. In stressing these positive aspects of poetry and, in particular, exploiting its emotional force for didactic ends, Empedocles arguably comes closer to the Aristotelian conception of poetry as an emotionally beneficial source of philosophical truths (cf. *Poet.* 9.1451a38–1451b4).

Most accounts of the rise of the Classical conception of poetry attribute the development of the theory of literary mimesis to the rise of a literate culture in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE.[243] More cautiously, we might say that literacy *facilitated* such a shift.[244] But a further factor that ought to be taken into consideration is the epistemological achievement of the Presocratics, especially Parmenides. In the Epilogue, we shall see that certain key literary-critical developments in the fourth century BCE were inspired by the Presocratic poets. But first, let us draw together into a conclusion some of the threads that have been running through these three case studies.

[243] Thus, the works listed at n. 83 above. In the most detailed study of the ancient concept of *mimesis*, Halliwell (2002) stresses the deeper roots of this notion in earlier Greek literature (15–22) but points out that 'there is little surviving evidence for the theorising of mimesis before Plato himself' (15). Nagy (1989) 47–51 similarly stresses the continuity, regarding 're-enactment' as the consistent core sense.

[244] Thus Ford (2002) 155.

Conclusion

My central aim has been to enrich our literary appreciation of these sometimes-maligned poems. I see the main value of this project as residing in the specific readings it has generated. The proof of this pudding will have been in the eating. If I have convinced any readers that these texts are more interesting literary artefacts than previously thought, then I am sufficiently rewarded. But in the course of pursuing this overarching aim, some general points have emerged.

It has been a running hypothesis that these authors were not restrained by their medium but rather masters of it. Their use of verse cannot be fully explained by recourse to their circumstances of production. It may well be true, at least of the cultural context in which Xenophanes and Parmenides operated, that prose was not yet a viable means of publication. But this explanation can only tell us so much. The same thing could be said of whoever composed the Homeric poems, but it would hardly provide an adequate account of the significance or impact of the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. Even in a purely oral culture, verse is a distinctive speech-genre with particular connotations, so that it does not *only* serve as a mnemonic or a means of publication. At least one further reason for the Presocratic poets' use of verse is that it enabled them to manipulate, artfully and self-consciously, the traditions of elegiac and hexameter poetry. One stimulating possibility, in line with recent trends in literary studies that have drawn on the findings of cognitive science, is that the use of particular narratives, images, and literary genres helped these authors to forge new concepts.[1] But my focus

[1] For an example of literary criticism that explores this possibility, see Lyne (2011). The idea that metaphors determine the arguments of Western philosophers (including the Presocratics) is argued by Lakoff and Johnson (1999). Variants of the idea that literary genres determine the conceptual content of philosophical texts have been argued by Marías (1971); Jordan (1981); Lang (1990) 24–44; Ferrell (2002); and Lavery (2007). See also Mourelatos (2008a) on Parmenides, whose approach is discussed in Chapter 2 Section 1 above.

has been not so much on the author's mindset during composition as on the other side to this coin, the effect of these features on their recipients.

Like other Archaic and Classical Greek verse, these texts are designed to elicit emotional and cognitive responses from the audience that are contingent on their particular form and phrasing. In this respect, they are not mere verse, but count as poems in an essential sense. Xenophanes, by presenting his god in the highly stylised *Kunstsprache* of hexameter verse, imbues him with a grandeur and reverence befitting traditional anthropomorphic deities. Parmenides, in his vividly immersive proem, takes us on a frightening yet enthralling trip beyond the boundaries of the familiar universe. Empedocles confronts us with the terrifying image of a father unwittingly sacrificing and eating his child, but also the sublime drama of the cosmic cycle in all its workings. Through their use of suggestive imagery and their comments on the limitations of mortal names, Parmenides and Empedocles prompt a critical exploration of the true underlying significance of their language. In doing so, they capitalise on the characteristic tendency of hexameter poetry to invite a symbolic interpretation.

These suggestions can help to add some nuance to the contested question of whether or not verse plays an essential philosophical role in these texts.[2] One problem is that it is not always clear what is meant by philosophy in this context since, as applied to these authors, the term denotes an 'etic' concept, one used by the interpreter, but unfamiliar to the culture under investigation.[3] Certainly, we can extract philosophical claims from the strict, semantic content of the language, translate them into formal logic and evaluate their coherence, validity and veracity.[4] If we define 'philosophy' as this paraphrasable content, then the use of verse, by definition, does not play an essential philosophical role. But, on my account, this sort of approach misses at least two important functions of the texts in question. First, if I am right in treating them as symbolic, they imply claims that they do not make overtly. Xenophanes implies that his god is worthy of veneration. Parmenides and Empedocles both imply that

[2] Granger (2007) argues explicitly that verse plays no essential philosophical role in Xenophanes; Barrett (2004) and Gheerbrant (2017) argue that it does, respectively, in Parmenides and Empedocles, though on different grounds to my own. Barrett sees the difficulties of Parmenides' verse as challenging us to reflect on the nature of linguistic reference, whilst Gheerbrant regards Empedocles' adaptation of traditional forms of Muse-inspiration as crucial to his message.

[3] On the issue of the respects in which the Presocratics may or may not be considered philosophers, see Laks (2018) 35–52. On the history of the term *philosophia*, see Burkert (1960).

[4] This procedure is standard in work on the Presocratics but meets its apex in the work of Barnes (1982).

the acquisition of knowledge is somehow analogous to mystic initiation. Of course, such implied claims can never be identified with certainty, but an interpretation that does not acknowledge their possibility is substantially incomplete. Secondly, as theorists have often pointed out, the essential value of a work of literature is not reducible to any message it may impart.[5] In arguing that these texts are true poems, I am claiming that they count as literature in this sense, so that if we read them purely for their 'message', we neglect the affective experiences they provide.

Both these functions may be regarded as playing an important philosophical role, the first more obviously so, since it is uncontroversial that philosophy is concerned with propositional claims. The second may be regarded as philosophical in a more subtle manner. If the experience of these texts as literature demands a critical reflection on the meaning of certain details, this could be characterised as a form of dialectic.[6] Most saliently, the obscurity of Parmenides' use of *esti* may be part of the point, since it gets the audience thinking about the meaning of being. So, the use of verse is a way of inducing an active engagement with philosophical questions. But the affective experience of these texts may also be characterised as philosophical in a further respect. Some theorists have argued that literature is essentially concerned with a kind of knowledge that is non-propositional.[7] Through literature, we learn what it is like to view the world from a particular perspective, to hold certain values and to feel certain emotional responses. I have argued that the Presocratic poems are designed to have these effects: they grant an experience of what it is like to view the world in a certain way, a way that may be more appropriate to true reality than habitual mortal attitudes. Of course, this theory of literary knowledge is not explicitly articulated as such until modern times, but the general idea is already implicit in Archaic depictions of the engrossing, emotional powers of song and in Plato's concerns over the ways in which poetry entrenches certain values. If we count this type of 'literary knowing' as philosophical – this knowing how it feels to view the world from a certain, value-laden perspective – then the poetic quality or 'poeticity' of these texts plays an essential philosophical role. The use of verse does not guarantee the quality of poeticity, but it does indicate that this is a quality to which they aspire.

At the same time, the explicit propositional claims made can shed light on the ultimate purposes of these affective experiences. Though scanty, the

[5] E.g. Sontag (1966); Cave (2016) 149–51.
[6] Thus, on Parmenides, Mackenzie (1982).
[7] See Introduction Section 2 above.

surviving Xenophanean fragments that describe his singular god, in light of his criticisms of Homer and Hesiod, serve the end of entrenching more beneficial theological attitudes as a counterpoint to the morally pernicious verses of canonical hexameter poetry. Parmenides' engrossing proem, in light of the goddess's stringent conditions on true being and her introduction to the *Doxa*, illustrates the deceptiveness of sensory experience. Empedocles portrays a tragic sacrifice to get us to refrain from killing and eating animals. More subtly, his emotive, first-person narrative of the *daimon* in exile encourages feelings of kinship with non-human organisms that can be explained in terms of the cosmology. Taken together, the explicit semantic content, the symbolic connotations activated by formal aspects as well as by intertextual and intratextual associations, and the cognitive and emotional impact of a performance are all directed towards the twin purposes of communicating that which would normally be ineffable and of bringing the audience from one set of beliefs to another.

There is every reason to think that the Presocratics' use of verse for these purposes was not unreflective or purely instinctive but quite deliberate. In Xenophanes' command that 'these things be thought like true things' (D50=B35), in the instruction of Parmenides' goddess that we 'judge by reason' her 'refutation' (D8.5=B7.5) and in Empedocles' suggestion that we 'plant' his teachings under our 'organs of thought' (D257=B110.1), the Presocratic poems feature meta-didactic comments that bespeak a rumination on the nature and function of verse. Their allusions to one another and, especially, to previous Muse-inspiration episodes form part of a discussion surrounding the relationship between verse and truth which goes back to Homer and Hesiod.

Through their poetic practice, they presuppose certain claims about poetry. Rather than being straightforward Archaic 'masters of truth', they manipulate the capacity of poetry to transport its audience into a vividly imagined yet potentially deceptive mimetic world. Parmenides and Empedocles both isolate a small number of objects that can be the object of true knowledge – be that singular true being or the six permanent entities – in relation to which the epistemic status of poetry can be assessed. By presenting the world of the *Doxa* in terms appropriate to poetic artifice, Parmenides emphasises the distance between poetry and true reality. Empedocles, by contrast, valorises poets. His poetry is an artisanal product, but although it is, in this respect, artificial, it can nevertheless act as a conduit to knowledge of universal truths. Parmenides and Empedocles are thus transitional figures in the movement towards an articulation of the Classical conception of poetry, whereby poems are mortally crafted, self-contained artefacts that present true claims only symbolically. The

claim that the objects of secure knowledge should be fundamentally unchanging facilitated later articulations of the notion that poetry symbolically represents such objects, whether through *ainigmata* or *mimesis*. This point will be substantiated in the Epilogue, which will trace some points of influence by the Presocratic poets on certain important developments in fifth- and fourth-century Greek poetics.

A more specific bestowal to European literature is in the influence of these authors on the genre of didactic poetry. Empedocles' importance for later poetry is now widely acknowledged and is most pervasive in the *De rerum natura*. But his work would not have been possible without the precedents of Xenophanes and especially Parmenides. In addition to the didactic form and the use of hexameters, at least four features that would become characteristic of the didactic genre are already evident in one or both of the two earlier poets and arise from the challenge of bringing an audience to a radically different understanding of the universe. First, their meta-didactic comments, serving to guide the audience past the limitations of mortal language, are instances of what Katherina Volk has termed 'poetic self-consciousness', a hallmark of Latin didactic poetry.[8] Second, for the three Presocratic poets, the interpretation of parts of the text is analogous to the interpretation of the world: we must penetrate beneath the misleading habitual sense of the language, just as we must look beyond our potentially specious sensory experience. This text–world analogy would recur in several prominent didactic poems: Aratus' acrostic at *Phaenomena* 783–7 reflects the way that constellations are hidden in the stars;[9] Lucretius draws an analogy between letters of his poem and the elements (e.g. 1.196–7, 823–7, 912–14);[10] Manilius, like Aratus, employs acrostics in such a manner as to suggest that his text is analogous to the cosmos it describes (e.g. 1.813–18).[11] Third, Empedocles follows Parmenides in presenting the process of education as a sort of mystic initiation, a 'didactic plot' that would recur in both the *De rerum natura* and Virgil's *Georgics*. Initiation acts as a familiar cultural model for distinguishing those 'who know' an ineffable, transformative truth from the ignorant. Fourth, my analysis has drawn upon, and corroborated, Conte's contention that Lucretius' sublime aesthetic is part of Empedocles' influence.[12] Yet such an aesthetic is already utilised by Parmenides, who presents the process of education as an extraordinary journey that culminates in

[8] Volk (2002) 9–10, although she denies that Parmenides displays this feature (50).
[9] See Hunter (1995). [10] See Friedländer (1941); Snyder (1980); Dalzell (1987).
[11] Colborn (2013). [12] See Chapter 3 Section 5b above.

a confrontation with an awesome divinity. In both authors, sublimity stems from an attempt to inculcate a conception of the world according to which generally accepted beliefs are erroneous: the elevating emotional trajectory conveys what it feels like to transcend the limitations of habitual mortal thoughts.

A more detailed exploration of the relationship between the Presocratic poets and later didactic poetry would require a separate study, but even from this brief overview it is apparent that, through using hexameter poetry to promote a radically new conception of the world, they expanded the resources of the medium in a manner that would have a lasting impact, affecting some of the most influential poems of antiquity. In addition to their important role in the history of philosophy, Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles deserve a prominent place in the histories of Greek poetics and ancient literature.

Epilogue: The Legacy of Presocratic Poetics

1 Introduction

To add some substance to my claim that the Presocratic poets played an important role in the development of the Classical conception of poetry, this epilogue shall highlight certain important developments in fifth- and fourth-century BCE poetics that they directly influenced. To be clear, these are developments in the explicitly articulated theory, rather than the practice, of poetry. The concepts of *ainigmata* and literary *mimesis* can fruitfully be applied to the earliest surviving Greek poetry, and there is some evidence to suggest that early poets had a sophisticated awareness of the features covered by these labels.[1] Nevertheless, later on, we find more systematic and explicit formulations of the idea that poetry conveys profound truths symbolically, or that, along with the visual arts, it is a mimetic form that offers a representation of the world. Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles greased the wheels of this process.

2 Anaxagoras, Allegory and *Ainigmata*

The term *allegoria* is first attested in Cicero (*Orat.* 27.92–4), and first attested in Greek in Plutarch (*Mor.* 19E–F), but 'allegory' has come to be used by modern scholars for what fifth-century BCE authors refer to as *ainigmata*, a term also translatable as 'riddles'.[2] As we observed in the Introduction (Section 2), *ainigmata* convey *hyponoiai*, or 'hidden meanings', but these need not be 'allegorical' in the later sense that they are the tenors of extended metaphors. The meanings can be hidden by any means,

[1] See Most (1993b) for a possible allegorical interpretation in Homer.
[2] On the development from *ainigmata* to *allegoria*, see Reinhardt (1960) and, more recently, Struck (2004).

for instance, through the use of misleadingly vague terms, or through ambiguous syntax.[3] In keeping with scholarly convention, I shall refer here to the understanding of poems as *ainigmata* in this sense as 'allegorical', even though the later term has certain inapplicable connotations.

As we noted in Chapter 1, an orthodox scholarly view holds that the allegorical exegesis of poetry originated with the shadowy figure of Theagenes of Rhegium, as a defence of the Homeric poems against the criticisms of Xenophanes. If this view is correct, then we have an obvious case in which a Presocratic poet inspired a literary-critical development. But Theagenes is only lately attested, we lack any verbatim fragments, and Porphyry, after explaining the allegorical interpretation of the *theomachia* (whereby Apollo, Helios and Hephaestus are fire; Poseidon and Scamander are water; Artemis is the moon; and Hera is the air) only says that this 'manner' (*tropos*) of interpretation is very ancient and goes back to Theagenes (*ap.* Schol. B *ad Il.* 20.67). This is rather flimsy evidence on which to posit a major development in the history of Greek criticism. What is more, allegorical interpretative practices were also attributed to Pherecydes of Syros, who may have been earlier than Xenophanes and, in any case, the conception of songs as enigmatically harbouring profound truths is already evident in the earliest poems themselves. 'Riddles' have been seen as a feature of Proto-Indo-European poetry.[4] A more plausible, if weaker, hypothesis is that Xenophanes' attacks provided an impetus for Theagenes' specific type of allegorical defence which, if the reports are accurate, understood the *Iliad* in terms of a Presocratic cosmology. If Homer's gods are not really fighting each other, then he may be less vulnerable to the charge of portraying them in an unbefitting and impious manner.

With greater confidence, we can say that the Presocratic poets influenced the manifestation of this sort of interpretation among the fifth-century Sophists.[5] Anaxagoras of Clazomenae seems to have been a key figure in this development. He was credited with bringing Ionian philosophy to Athens (Clem. *Strom.* 1.63=P13<A7) and was most famous for being exiled for claiming that the sun was a fiery mass (Diog. Laert. 2.12=P23<A1). Even if this story is a later fabrication, influenced by the trial of Socrates,[6] it suggests a reputation as a denier of traditional mythological explanations for natural phenomena. When this reputation is taken in combination

[3] See further Richardson (1975) 66–7 and Ford (2002) 72. [4] West (2007) 363–72.
[5] On whom, see Richardson (1975) and Morgan (2000) 89–131 esp. 98–101.
[6] Thus, Dover (1975) 31–4.

with the testimony that he was the first to claim that the 'poetry of Homer is about virtue and justice' (Favorinus fr. 61 Barigazzi *ap.* Diog. Laert. 2.11=D98<A1), he starts to look like an allegorist (in the broad sense), someone who argued that earlier mythological poems were not simply about their ostensible subject matter (say, the Trojan war or the return of Odysseus), but about the immutable truths sought by philosophers.[7] Furthermore, he is credited with inspiring later allegorical interpreters. According to Diogenes, he taught the notorious allegorist Metrodorus of Lampsacus (Diog. Laert. 2.11=D98<A1). He is also widely acknowledged as the principal source of inspiration for the cosmology that the Derveni commentator sees encoded in the Orphic theogony.[8]

The sort of cosmological allegoresis of Metrodorus and the Derveni commentator was clearly in the tradition of Presocratic cosmological speculation and the fact that Xenophanes, Parmenides and Empedocles wrote in hexameters may in particular have been an influencing factor. As we have seen, Empedocles uses traditional divine names in an allegorical (in this sense) manner. More tentatively, in one case, reported in Plato's *Timaeus* 22c–d, the myth of Phaethon is allegorised as a deviation in the heavenly bodies that caused huge fires on the earth, perhaps under the inspiration of Parmenides' use of the same myth (see Chapter 2 Section 5b above). A more specific connection is Parmenides' influence on Anaxagoras. Like Empedocles' elemental theory, Anaxagoras' cosmology is an attempt to defend the existence of the pluralistic cosmos whilst accepting the Parmenidean principle that nothing can be created *ex nihilo* or destroyed *in nihil* (Anaxagoras D15=B17): 'there is a portion of everything in everything' (D25=B6) except 'mind' (*nous*, D26=B11; D27=B12), and each thing is 'most manifestly' that thing of which it contains the most (D27=B12). In other words, what we perceive as gold contains within it portions of all stuffs, but it contains more gold than anything else, so the manifest substance appears to us as gold. For Anaxagoras, then, we can distinguish the manifest from the pure type of any given stuff: the manifest stuff – say, 'gold' – is what we perceive, but it actually contains portions of all pure stuffs; the portions of pure gold it contains are greater in mass than the portions of pure silver, or hair, or flesh, or any other stuff within it. Creation and destruction are, then, explicable as rearrangements of these putative 'pure' stuffs, just as, for Empedocles, they are explicable as

[7] In support of this view, see Sider (2005) 61–6.
[8] First argued by Burkert (1968), and since refined by e.g. Betegh (2004) 278–305. See also, on this point, Piano (2016) 292–7.

rearrangements of the four elements. This point of similarity is marked by the remarkably similar claims made by Anaxagoras D15=B17 and Empedocles D53=B8 and D54=B9.[9] This similarity is probably best explained on the grounds that both authors are responding to Parmenides.[10] Whatever the exact nature of the relationship, an intellectual genealogy can confidently be drawn between Parmenides and Anaxagoras, a key figure in the rise of Sophistic allegorical interpretation.

One can speculate further that this connection with Anaxagoras extended to the realm of poetic interpretation in the 'Anaxagorean School'.[11] If Metrodorus did indeed read Homer as explicating Anaxagoras' cosmology, one of the cosmological details he identified in Homer was that the moon shines with light reflected from the sun (cf. Anaxagoras D40=B18). Parmenides seems to have been the first to discover this phenomenon (D27=B14; D28=B15).[12] He thus memorably describes the moon as 'ἀλλότριον φῶς' (D27=B14) or 'foreign light', an expression that was taken up by Empedocles (D139=B45) and which itself was an adaptation of the Homeric formula ἀλλότριος φώς, 'foreign person' (*Il.* 5.214; *Od.* 16.102, 18.219). Parmenides, then, in his hexameter poem, adapts a line describing a person to describe the moon; Metrodorus sees an Iliadic character as in fact representing to the moon; and both Parmenides and Metrodorus see the underlying point as being that the moon shines with light reflected from the sun. It is tempting to suggest that Metrodorus' allegorical interpretation of the *Iliad* was not only influenced (directly or indirectly) by Parmenides' astronomical discovery, but also by his own practice of appropriating Homeric language to describe physical phenomena in a personifying manner. Whilst such a claim is of course highly speculative, it is hard to deny that Parmenides was a major influence on the wider intellectual context in which Metrodorus was active, and his poem could have provided an inspiration for these sorts of interpretation.

[9] Note e.g. the vocabulary of 'mixture' and 'separation' and the emphasis on the language used: Anaxagoras D15=B17: 'The Greeks do not consider creation and destruction correctly; for no thing is created or destroyed, but, from the things that are, is mixed together (συμμίσγεται) and separates (διακρίνεται). And thus they would correctly call (καλοῖεν) creation mixture and destruction separation'; Empedocles D53=B8: 'And I will tell you another thing: there is no creation of any at all / of mortal things, nor is there any end of accursed death / but there is only mixture (μίξις) and exchange (διάλλαξις) of the mixed things / but creation is the name given (ὀνομάζεται) to them by mortals.'

[10] See e.g. Graham (1999). The relative chronology of Anaxagoras and Empedocles is controversial, due to the ambiguity of Aristotle's testimony at *Metaph.* 1.984a11–13. See O'Brien (2005) 319–21.

[11] For the notion of an Anaxagorean 'school' associated with allegorical interpretation, note Syncellus *Chron.* 140C=DK61A6 and see Richardson (1975) 70; Morgan (2000) 98.

[12] On this point, see Mourelatos (2012).

In at least one case, the distinctively Parmenidean epistemological distinction between *aletheia* and *doxa* seems to have been invoked in the explication of Homer, by the late fifth-century associate of Socrates, Antisthenes (fr. 194 Prince=Dio Chrys. *Or.* 53 *On Homer* §5):

> ὁ δὲ Ζήνων οὐδὲν τῶν τοῦ Ὁμήρου ψέγει, ἅμα διηγούμενος καὶ διδάσκων ὅτι τὰ μὲν κατὰ δόξαν τὰ δὲ κατὰ ἀλήθειαν γέγραφεν, ὅπως μὴ φαίνηται αὐτὸς αὑτῷ μαχόμενος ἔν τισι δοκοῦσιν ἐναντίως εἰρῆσθαι. ὁ δὲ λόγος οὗτος Ἀντισθένους ἐστὶ πρότερον, ὅτι τὰ μὲν δόξῃ, τὰ δὲ ἀληθείᾳ εἴρηται τῷ ποιητῇ. ἀλλ' ὁ μὲν οὐκ ἐξειργάσατο αὐτόν, ὁ δὲ καθ' ἕκαστον τῶν ἐπὶ μέρους ἐδήλωσεν. ἔτι δὲ καὶ Περσαῖος ὁ τοῦ Ζήνωνος κατὰ τὴν αὐτὴν ὑπόθεσιν γέγραφε καὶ ἄλλοι πλείους.
>
> Zeno blames none of the verses of Homer, but in the course of setting them out in detail he teaches that Homer has written some according to opinion and others according to truth, in order that he not appear to be contradicting himself in certain verses that seem to be said in opposition to each other. This principle is previously from Antisthenes, that some things have been said by the poet in opinion and some in truth. But he did not work it out, whereas he [Zeno] showed it according to each of the parts. And further also Persaeus pupil of Zeno has written according to the same hypothesis, and many others. (Trans. Prince [2015])

Though it does not mention him by name, this source distinctly recalls Parmenides. Dio's language is very similar to that used by the doxographers to describe the different parts of his poem. The expression 'according to opinion … according to truth' (κατὰ δόξαν … κατὰ ἀλήθειαν) is used by ancient commentators in reference to the philosopher's work.[13] Here, according to one interpretation, the distinction is applied to the allegorical tenor and its vehicle: what 'Homer has written according to opinion' refers to his ostensible sense, which has to be decoded to yield his true meaning.[14] This view is supported by Antisthenes' own creative use of myth to demonstrate ethical points. Thus, he used Heracles as a paradigm for the ethical principle that toil is good (fr. 85 Prince=Diog. Laert. 6.2), an example that would later be mentioned alongside Prodicus' more famous use of the hero (fr. 44 C Prince=Julian *Or.* 7.216d–217b). The creative use of myth to illustrate certain ethical points is a natural extension from the identification of ethical points in canonical mythical texts and may strengthen the possibility that Antisthenes' comments on 'truth and opinion' in Homer refer respectively to the

[13] Theophrastus *ap.* Alexander, *in Metaph.* 31.9–14=R13<A7: οὐχ ὁμοίως περὶ ἀμφοτέρων δοξάζων, ἀλλὰ κατ' ἀλήθειαν μὲν … κατὰ δόξαν δὲ … Cf. also Simplicius *in Cael.* 7.556.12–14=R7<A14.

[14] See Prince (2015) *ad loc.*, who does not endorse this view. It is, however, supported by the fact that he is associated here with Zeno, who was best known for his allegorical interpretations.

unchanging truths he communicates and the opinions in which he dresses them, just as Parmenides' *Aletheia* is the reality that we are to identify beneath the world of the *Doxa*.[15] On the other hand, recent commentators have tended to reject the allegorical reading on the grounds that 'truth' and 'opinion' here do not correspond to *interpretative* practices, but to parts of Homer's composition.[16] Prince suggests instead that Antisthenes' use of these terms refers to a distinction between narrator-speech and character-speech, given that he uses this distinction to explain an apparent inconsistency in the depiction of the Cyclopes (fr. 189 Prince=schol. *ad Od.* 9.106):[17] they enjoy a land of spontaneous plenty in spite of the fact that at *Od.* 9.275 they are 'heedless of aegis-bearing Zeus', but Antisthenes points out that that line is spoken by Polyphemus, not the primary narrator. If we accept this explanation, the connection with Parmenides is still salient: Homer the omniscient narrator becomes analogous to Parmenides' authoritative goddess, whilst his characters are like the heedless mortals.

In either case, Antisthenes' use of the *Aletheia*/*Doxa* binary in the context of Homeric exegesis, when taken alongside Parmenides' influence on Anaxagoras and the reports of Anaxagoras' associations with allegorical interpretation, amount to a cumulative case for Parmenides' importance for fifth-century Homeric 'allegorical' criticism. Indeed, Anaxagoras' own epistemology involved a distinction between the unseen, putative, 'pure' portions which alone occupy the category *Aletheia* and the manifest visible world (D5=B21). One can speculate that this epistemological distinction may have led to a distinction between the 'true' and the 'apparent' meanings of Homer's language.

3 Gorgias

The fragments of Gorgias constitute some of the most important documents in our history of fifth-century Greek poetics. His reported dictum that tragedy is a 'deception in which the deceiver is more just than the one who does not deceive and the deceived is wiser than the undeceived' (D35=B23) has been lauded as the earliest valorisation of poetic deception.[18] His *Encomium of*

[15] Prince (2015) 668.

[16] The allegorical reading is forcefully rejected by Tate (1953); see also Richardson (1975) 77; Prince (2015) *ad loc.*

[17] Prince (2015) 668.

[18] As opposed to earlier pejorative comments on the deceptive capacity of poetry. E.g. Finkelberg (1998) 177; similarly, de Romilly (1973) 160–1; Russell (1981) 22–4; Verdenius (1983) 29–30. Ford (2002) 172–3 is more cautious, suggesting that the Gorgias' point is primarily to showcase an ethical paradox. Halliwell (2011) 267–84 argues that for Gorgias the deceptiveness of poetry is compatible

Helen (D24=B11) contains the earliest attested definition of poetry as versified speech (§9) and also gives articulation to the notion that poetry causes the soul of the listener to be affected emotionally by the affairs of others. Famously, as we have had reason to observe already, this passage stipulates the characteristic responses to poetry as pity and fear, the emotions that Aristotle would canonise as the appropriate response to tragedy. Gorgias' epistemological, physical and metaphysical claims show the clear influence of Parmenides and Empedocles. My contention is that this influence also encompasses his claims pertaining to poetic theory.

Significantly for our purposes, Gorgias was known as the student of Empedocles (Diog. Laert. 8.58–9=P5=A3; Olympiodorus *in Gorgiam* Prooem. 9). Such teacher–student relationships in ancient biographies are often met with scepticism, since the biographers have a tendency to draw connections on little evidence,[19] but chronological and geographical considerations permit this possibility as both came from Sicily and were born in the early part of the fifth century BCE.[20] Even if we choose to disbelieve the story, it indicates that ancient readers saw a connection between the work of these two authors, a connection that is borne out by certain internal details. As Diels showed long ago, the surviving fragments and testimonia for Gorgias' work show both the philosophical and stylistic influence of Empedocles. Plato (*Meno* 76a–e=D45a=B4) and Theophrastus (*De igne* 73=D45b=B5) report that Gorgias held an Empedoclean theory of vision as arising from effluences, and the surviving speeches are full of the florid antitheses, repetitions and use of *homoioteleuton* that also characterise the poet's work.[21]

We can reasonably infer that this influence extended further. In the *Encomium of Helen*, Gorgias famously argues that if speech (λόγος) persuaded Helen to go to Troy, she was inculpable (§8–10, 13–15). Speech is a 'great potentate' (δυνάστης μέγας) which 'with the tiniest and least-clear body (σμικροτάτωι σώματι καὶ ἀφανεστάτωι) accomplishes the most divine deeds' (§8). This physical conception of speech as a 'tiny body' recalls the theories of the atomists, who, like Empedocles, were defending a pluralistic cosmos against Parmenidean principles that what-is must be unchanging and indestructible. But, given the association with

with the idea that it harbours truth (perhaps in the sense that it illustrates ethical truths, rather than detailing accurate facts).

[19] See e.g. *OCD*[4] *s.v.* 'biography, Greek'.

[20] Olympiodorus (*In Gorg.* Prooem. 9) dates Gorgias' birth to 470/469 BCE; Diogenes Laertius (8.52) places Empedocles' *floruit* in the period of 456/452 BCE.

[21] Diels (1884), still the key study in this issue. Note also Segal (1962) 101.

Empedoclean theories of perception, we might in particular recall the Empedoclean doctrine that sound (probably including speech) is composed of 'air' (Aët. 4.16.1=D227=A93) which itself could be regarded as a 'tiny body'. Certainly, later ancient commentators regarded Empedocles' elements as constituting 'bodies' (σώματα, e.g. Philoponus *de anima* 344.34 *ad* Arist. 418b.20<A57; Alexander *ad* Arist. *de sens.* 2.437b23<B84; perhaps already Plato *Leg.* 10.889b=A48).

Gorgias' comments on speech recall Empedocles in other respects. To illustrate the powers of speech, he mentions emotive poetry (§8) and incantations (ἐπωιδαί) that can induce pleasures or relieve pains and are examples of sorcery (γοητεία) and magic (μαγεία). Later on, persuasive speech is said to have the same effect on the soul as drugs (φάρμακα) have on the body (§14). Some speeches 'drug and bewitch the soul' (τὴν ψυχὴν ἐφαρμάκευσαν καὶ ἐξεγοήτευσαν). This conception of song as 'bewitchment' or 'enchantment' is at least as old as Homer.[22] The most pertinent model was the episode, mentioned in the Introduction, where Helen's drug causes forgetfulness of ills (*Od.* 4.221) and seems to symbolise the function of her speech.[23] But given the other connections with Empedocles, we would be justified in identifying a further connection with his poetry. The Empedoclean narrator's persona is that of both a healer (D4=B112.11–12) and a sorcerer (D43=B111). He has a reputation for being able to speak a 'healing utterance' (D4=B112.11) to those suffering ailments, in other words, a sort of incantation. This doubtless led to the later anecdote involving Empedocles' performance of *Od.* 4.221 to charm the would-be murderer (Iamblichus *VP* 113=P17<A15). Empedocles' poetry aspires to persuasion (D61=B71.1) just as Gorgias' comments concern the persuasiveness of speech. It is as if Empedocles' own poetry were designed to conform to the linguistic principles set out in these sections of the *Encomium*. His unification of speech, poetry, incantation and persuasion, when taken in combination with the biographical and other philosophical associations with Gorgias, permit the inference that his poetic practice influenced the theory of language and poetry proposed in the speech.

If Empedocles' practice provided a model of the sort of speech that Gorgias theorises, the source of Parmenides' influence seems largely to have been his argumentative content. Gorgias' notorious *On What Is Not* was formulated in direct response to the Eleatics, of whom Parmenides was the

[22] De Romilly (1973) 156–7 argues that in Homer this notion only usually occurs with divine singers such as the Sirens, but as she notes, one (surely programmatic) counterexample occurs at *Od.* 1.337. See further Halliwell (2011) 45–50.

[23] See Introduction Section 1 above.

most prominent figure.[24] In the treatise, which survives in summaries by Sextus Empiricus (*Math*. 7.65–87=D26b=B3) and the pseudo-Aristotelian *On Melissus, Xenophanes, and Gorgias* (§5–6, 979a–980b=D26a), Gorgias notoriously argued that 'there is not anything', that 'if there is, it is unknowable' and 'if there is and it is knowable, then it is not communicable to others'. As Jaap Mansfeld argued, this probably is not to be taken at face value to mean that nothing exists, but is rather directed specifically against the speculative theoretical constructions of the Presocratics above all, Parmenides.[25] *On What Is Not*, as far as we can tell from the summaries, redeploys the language and principles from Parmenides' discussion of being and not-being, while the *MXG* reports that the work began with a summary of the ideas of earlier philosophers, including those who claim that 'what-is is one and not many', that is, the Eleatics.

For Gorgias, it seems, Parmenides is mistaken in thinking that there is a fundamental entity that transcends the world of opinion. Rather, the world of subjective opinion is all that there is. This epistemological and metaphysical principle has been seen to underlie the theory of language in the *Helen*, for in that speech, as Calogero wrote, '*logos* does not have the theoretical function of mirroring reality, or mirroring our knowledge of reality, it has merely a certain practical and rhetorical function, viz., to put the mind in a [certain] affective state through persuasion'.[26] Such an understanding of the function of language constitutes a response to Parmenides: for Parmenides, knowledge of true reality is characterised positively in contrast with the deceptive world of mortal names and opinions; for Gorgias, there is no transcendent reality from which mortal opinion is a corruption. Parmenides had used literary verisimilitude to illustrate the gap between mortal opinions and reality; Gorgias vindicates literary verisimilitude since he excludes the possibility that language has the higher purpose of reflecting true reality. Thus, Gorgias defends literary deception (D35=B23). Whilst an association between poets and deception is at least as old as the *Odyssey*, Parmenides appears to be the earliest surviving poet to describe part of his own work explicitly as deceptive (D8.57=B8.52), and consequently Verdenius argued that Gorgias was

[24] For this treatise as a response to Parmenides, see Wardy (1996) 6–24 and Mansfeld (1985).

[25] Mansfeld (1985). See, similarly, Curd (2006).

[26] Calogero (1977) 262, who also argued that Gorgias' epistemology was largely indistinguishable from that of Protagoras. This translation of Calogero is from Mourelatos (1987) 135–6, who expands on Calogero's point and argues that Gorgias attacks the notions that linguistic meaning is reference and that it is a mental idea, assuming instead, in both the *Encomium* and *On What Is Not*, a 'behaviourist' conception of meaning, whereby language is prompted by certain stimuli and has certain effects on its listeners.

inspired by Parmenides on this point.[27] The connection between Parmenides and Gorgias here is strengthened by the fact that Gorgias describes deception (as well as the charms of incantations) as working on the *doxa* of the soul (D24=B11§10).

The idea that poetry is *supposed* to be a deception approaches the later notion of fiction. Although this idea may well already be implicit in the *Odyssey* and in the Homeric *Hymn to Hermes*, our sources do not present an explicit articulation of it until Gorgias. An important development in poetics, then, seems to have been formulated as a response to Parmenides' restrictions on what constitutes true reality: a specific and narrow definition of what constitutes true reality was the catalyst for the claim that poetry need not fulfil such a definition.

4 Democritus on Literature

The atomic theory, probably invented by the shadowy Leucippus and then refined by the more prolific Democritus, was another defence of the pluralistic cosmos that retained Eleatic principles against absolute creation and destruction.[28] In contrast with Empedocles and Anaxagoras, the atomists denied the Parmenidean claim that there is no such thing as not-being, positing the existence of 'void'. The language they seem to have used in reference to atoms and void – literally, 'that which is' and 'that which is not' (τὸ μὲν ὄν, τὸ δὲ μὴ ὄν) – sounds distinctly Parmenidean.[29] Along with this Parmenides-influenced metaphysics, there is also a Parmenides-influenced epistemology: for Democritus, atoms are the usually inaccessible reality that underlies our sensory experiences; the latter are merely variable 'conventions' (D14<B9; D23a=B125; D24=B117; cf. D15<B9; D16=B10), comparable to Parmenidean 'opinions'. Nevertheless, the atomic theory provides an explanation for the causes of sensation: vision, for instance, occurs because objects emit 'effluences' (ἀπόρροιαι) of atoms in the shape of 'images' (εἴδωλα) that reach the eyes of the viewer (D146=B123; Aët. 4.13.1=D145<A29; Theophr. *Sens.* 50=D147<A135). Sound occurs when atoms of air pass quickly through void, a process that takes place in the ears when we hear sounds (Theophr. *Sens.*

[27] Verdenius (1981) 124–7.

[28] On atomism as a response to Parmenides, note e.g. Furley (1967) 79–103; Wardy (1988); Sedley (2008). This view goes back to antiquity (e.g. Arist. *Gen. corr.* 1.8.325a2; Simpl. *In Phys.* 28.4=Theophrastus *Phys. Op.* fr. 8).

[29] E.g. in the report of Simplicius *Physics* 28.14–16 (<D32=A8, A38).

55–6<A135).[30] It is not clear which aspects of the theory were developed by Leucippus and which were original to Democritus, but we have far more evidence for the views and works of the latter.

Significantly for our purposes, among his copious writings, Democritus was credited with having written eight works on poetry and music (Diog. Laert. 9.48): *On Rhythm and Harmony*; *On Poetry*; *On the Beauty of Words*; *On Nice-sounding and Bad-sounding letters*; *On Homer or On Correct Words and Unusual Words*; *On Song*; *On Words*; *Onomastic Matters*. Although only a few fragments survive, there is enough material to have led scholars to credit him with what can broadly be distinguished as three important conceptual developments in the field of poetics. First, Democritus proposed an anthropological theory for the origins of poetry in human history, as arising naturally through imitation of animals (D203=B154) rather than as a divine gift, and as a leisure activity arising through surplus rather than a necessary one (D204<B144).[31] Second, although he still maintained that poets could be divinely inspired (D217=B18), he seems to have offered a physical explanation for this process, in atomic terms: divine inspiration occurs when a 'divine breath' (D217=B18; cf. D221=B21), probably composed of the same fiery atoms of which the soul is formed (D130<A101; D132<A28; D133<A101, all from Aristotle's summary at *De an.* 1.2.403b–405a), enters the poet/singer.[32] Third, as Andrew Ford writes, 'his materialist perspective could support a view of "making" poems as a process of selecting elementary substances (atomic sounds) and organising them into a structure or "system" that, by virtue of its constituents and their organization, produced a specific effect on the auditor's psyche, itself having a physiological substratum.'[33] In support of this view, according to Aristotle, the atomists illustrated their physical principles using the example of the components of language: different sensible objects are made up of different atoms, just as different words are made up of different

[30] For a good overview of some of the exegetical problems raised by Democritus holding simultaneously that only atoms are real, but also that collections of atoms have undeniably real, sensible properties not shared by the atoms themselves, see, concisely, Warren (2007) 166–71. For more detailed studies, see Furley (1993) and O'Keefe (1997). For Democritus' theories of vision and hearing, see Sassi (1978) 96–109, 117–19.

[31] Cole (1967) 43; Ford (2002) 145–6.

[32] Thus Delatte (1934) 35–6; Ford (2002) 168–9. Heraclitus' cosmos seems to have contained a similarly fiery exhalation of which souls are composed. See Betegh (2013). This physical explanation runs counter to the view, derived from Horace *Ars poetica* 295–7 and found in Dodds (1951) 82, that Democritus was an irrationalist championing the inexplicable madness of poets, although it is possible that Democritus explained 'madness' as an extraordinary arrangement of atoms that was particularly receptive to the divine 'breath' (thus, Delatte).

[33] Ford (2002) 164–5. See, similarly, Brancacci (2007).

letters and syllables (Arist. *Metaph.* 1.4.985b4=D31=67A6); the same atoms can create different effects, just as the same letters make up both tragedies and comedies (Arist. *Gen. corr.* 1.2.315b6=D56=67A9). For Ford, then, Democritus' atomic theory provided a scientific basis on which to analyse poetry, as an entity put together out of distinguishable components, but which is more than the sum of its parts.

In certain respects, these poetic developments are presaged by the Presocratic poets and, in particular, can be seen as expansions of their influence upon the physical doctrines. First, whilst Democritus' anthropological explanations for human history are more sophisticated than anything attested among the earlier Presocratics, Xenophanes offers a similar perspective on primordial human discoveries. As we saw, Xenophanes D53=B18 rules out the possibility of direct divine communication, instead claiming that 'in time, through seeking, men discover better'. On a straightforward reading of this fragment, we would have to include poetry and music within the discoveries that have been achieved by humans without the aid of the gods. In this respect, Democritus' theory of the origins of poetry makes explicit an entailment of Xenophanes' claim. On a broader level, Parmenides may have furnished Democritus with an epistemological framework within which to articulate this theory. Parmenides' goddess ruled out the validity of all previous claims to divine inspiration (and indeed, of the factual content of all previous narrative poetry): our beliefs are a result of 'names' that, at some prior point in time, mortals 'set down' for what-is, 'trusting them to be true' (D8.44=B8.39). For her, mortal beliefs do not arise from objective reality, or through divine inspiration, but come as a result of fallible mortal agency. This sort of explanation could have provided a precedent for Democritus' naturalised understanding of major discoveries in history: his 'anthropology' is a continuation of the Eleatic tradition of rewriting human history in a manner that debunks the traditional role played by divine-to-mortal communication.

Secondly, I have argued that Empedocles presents a systematic cosmological explanation for divine inspiration: the Muse Kalliopeia is an agent of cosmic Love. Democritus' explanation similarly posits that poetic inspiration is caused by the same basic processes that lie behind all other sensible phenomena. Both provide a systematic explanation for this traditional phenomenon. Within the wider Eleatic tradition, Democritus' explanation for the divine inspiration of poets, like Empedocles' use of the Muse, can be read as a revalorisation of a traditional poetic feature

against the criticism of Xenophanes and against Parmenides' negative implications for poetry.

More fundamentally, an atomic theory of the composition of song and its effects on the auditor seems rooted in Parmenidean and Empedoclean principles. As we noted in Chapter 2, Democritus adapts a Parmenidean expression when describing Homer's poetry:

> Ὅμηρος φύσεως λαχὼν θεαζούσης ἐπέων κόσμον ἐτεκτήνατο παντοίων
>
> Homer, having been allotted a divine nature, built an arrangement of all kinds of words
>
> (D221=B21)

Homer 'builds' a *kosmos* out of words, presumably in like manner to how visible objects are made out of atoms.[34] The verb translated here as 'built' (τεκταίνομαι) is used of carpenters or smiths.[35] His 'divine nature' probably means that he has an atomic constitution that is especially susceptible to receiving the 'divine breath' or divine images (εἴδωλα) of atoms.[36] Ford argues that, 'This is praise of Homer as word-constructor, not poem-maker', possibly a defence against Protagoras' (not necessarily serious) criticisms that Homer had not chosen the correct words.[37] Certainly, this view is supported by the fact that an alternative title for Democritus' work *On Homer* was *On the Correct Words* (i.e. *orthoepeia*) *and Unusual Words*. Indeed, one example of this sort of practice survives: Democritus defended the epithet for Athena, *Tritogeneia*, 'thrice-born' on the grounds that it refers to her triple concerns with proper reason, speech, and action (D293=B2). But it should be noted here that the praise of D221=B21 is not only of word selection, but of the whole structure that is formed out of those words. The Parmenidean intertext supports a reading of this fragment as praise of the world Homer creates through all kinds of words. Parmenides had used the expression '*kosmos* of words' of the deceptive account of the world of opinion (D8.57=B8.52). Given that the atomic

[34] Thus Ford (2002) 169–70.

[35] See Lanata (1963) 261–2; Russell (1981) 73.

[36] See Guthrie (1965) 478 n. 1; Ford (2002) 170–1; Brancacci (2007) 201–2, who connects the use of the verb λαγχάνω, 'be allotted', with D154=B166, where Democritus εὔχετο εὐλόγχων τυχεῖν εἰδώλων, 'prays to meet with well-allotted images'; for the idea that it is the divine 'breath' that enters Homer here, see Delatte (1934) 28–36.

[37] Ford (2002) 170. Protagoras lectured on *orthoepeia* (D24=A28; D25=A29), and is reported to have criticised Homer, for instance, for using a command instead of a request when invoking the Muse at the opening of the *Iliad* (D25=A29=Arist. *Poet.* 19.1456b15–18). Fehling (1965) 212–7 argues that Protagoras made these arguments as a display of Sophistic skill, rather than as an attempt at a widespread linguistic reform. Democritus D222=B23 suggests that the atomist was concerned with similar issues of linguistic propriety.

theory developed as a response to Parmenidean arguments against absolute creation and destruction, we would be justified in reading this as a reappropriation of Parmenidean language: a poetic cosmos of words becomes no longer an inferior substitute for knowledge of the truth; instead, its internal coherence is a virtue. Indeed, such a cosmos of words, whilst clearly the product of mortal agency in Parmenides, becomes divinely inspired in Democritus.

This response to Parmenides is paralleled by that of Empedocles. As we saw, Empedocles adapted the same line (D73.257=B17.26). In a manner comparable to Democritus' comment on Homer, he presented his own poetry as the product of a manual craft, formed of distinct components, just as the physical world is composed of the four elements. If Democritus' 'materialist perspective could support a view of "making"[38] poems as a process of selecting elementary substances', the same could already be said of Empedocles. Similarly, the idea that the effects of song depend upon 'the auditor's psyche, itself having a physiological substratum' may already be presupposed by Empedocles D257=B110, where we must receive the text in a certain manner which is presumably explicable in terms of Empedocles' elemental physiology.

5 Democritus and the Sophists on Language

Each of Democritus' three achievements in poetics is, then, foreshadowed in some part by the Presocratic poets, but there is a further relevant point of contact with Empedocles in Democritus' claims for language more generally. For Democritus, it seems, speech, like our sensory experience, is a matter of convention (*nomos*) rather than nature. Proclus, in his commentary on Plato's *Cratylus*, presents Democritus as a champion of the conventionalist theory of naming, that is to say that names have no natural connection to their referents, but only a conventional one (Procl. *in Crat.* 16, pp.6.20–7.6=D205<B26).[39] Names are adopted for things arbitrarily (*thesei*). According to Proclus, Democritus developed four arguments in favour of this view:

> ἐκ τῆς ὁμωνυμίας· τὰ γὰρ διάφορα πράγματα τῷ αὐτῷ καλοῦνται ὀνόματι, οὐκ ἄρα φύσει τὸ ὄνομα· καὶ ἐκ τῆς πολυωνυμίας· εἰ γὰρ τὰ διάφορα ὀνόματα ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ καὶ ἓν πρᾶγμα ἐφαρμόσουσιν, καὶ

[38] Also notable in this regard is that Democritus is an early user of the word *poietes* (D217=B18, lit. 'maker') for 'poet'. See Ford (2002) 136.

[39] On this testimony, see Sluiter (1997) 172–3.

> ἐπάλληλα, ὅπερ ἀδύνατον· τρίτον ἐκ τῆς τῶν ὀνομάτων μεταθέσεως· διὰ τί γὰρ τὸν Ἀριστοκλέα μὲν Πλάτωνα, τὸν δὲ Τύρταμον Θεόφραστον μετωνομάσαμεν, εἰ φύσει τὰ ὀνόματα; ἐκ δὲ τῆς τῶν ὁμοίων ἐλλείψεως· διὰ τί ἀπὸ μὲν τῆς φρονήσεως λέγομεν φρονεῖν, ἀπὸ δὲ τῆς δικαιοσύνης οὐκέτι παρονομάζομεν; τύχῃ ἄρα καὶ οὐ φύσει τὰ ὀνόματα
>
> (1) from homonymy (for different things are called by the same name, hence the name is not by nature); (2) from polyonymy (for if different names are applied to one and the same thing, [*sc.* they will be applied] mutually as well, which is impossible); (3) the third from the change of names (for why did we change the name of Aristocles to Plato, and of Tyrtamus to Theophrastus, if names are by nature?); and (4) from the lack of similar [*sc.* forms] (why do we say *phronein* ['to think'] derived from *phronesis* ['thought'], but we have no word derived from *dikaiosune* ['justice']?) So names are by chance and not by nature. (trans. LM)

Some of the arguments are obscure: it is not clear what it means for names to be applied 'mutually' or why that is 'impossible'. It is also unclear how much of this goes back to Democritus of Abdera: the example of Theophrastus must post-date the fifth century. But these sorts of arguments, as Plato's *Cratylus* attests, are characteristic of fifth-century BCE sophistic debates. In some details, they resemble Empedocles' comments on language. He anticipates the polyonymy argument at D73.251–7=B17.20–6, where mortals have different names for what he calls *philotes*. It is possible that he, too, understood mortal language to be conventional on this basis. In D54=B9.9, according to most editors,[40] Empedocles refers to mortal names for birth and death as a *nomos*, a 'convention', since in reality these processes are mixture and disintegration. As we saw, Empedocles' comments on language developed from Parmenides' comments on mortal names which reflect the deceptive world of mortal opinion and both Parmenides and Empedocles draw upon a traditional conception of the difference between divine and mortal language. The Democritean comments on language can again be seen as part of this tradition: for Parmenides, mortal language is deceptive and does not have a secure connection to true reality; for Empedocles and Democritus, it is conventional and similarly severed from the true objects of knowledge (in Empedocles' case, the six permanent entities; in Democritus' case, atoms).

Even if the arguments reported by Proclus do not in fact go back to Democritus, our sources amply demonstrate that the fifth-century Sophists debated the two related questions of whether words originally arose somehow naturally or by the arbitrary decision of a name-giver and whether

[40] But not LM, who prefer ὁμῶς (giving the sense 'I assent in the same way', rather than 'I assent to the *nomos*'), a very slight emendation for ὅμως, a better attested manuscript reading than *νόμῳ*.

words today have a natural or merely a conventional connection to their referents.[41] In Plato's *Cratylus*, the eponymous character is presented as espousing a 'naturalist' position in answer to the latter question against Hermogenes' 'conventionalist' opinion (although, later in the dialogue, Socrates argues that the question is in fact one of the origins of words, 425a–b). The Derveni commentator seems to treat Orpheus as an original, semi-divine name-giver (Col. 22.1–3). Prodicus argued against the possibility of 'polyonymy' or synonyms, suggesting that all apparent synonyms in fact have subtle distinctions in meaning (D6a<A19), perhaps a 'naturalist' response to Democritus' conventionalism.[42] Protagoras' comments on the 'correctness of words' (*orthoepeia*) in Homer has sometimes been understood as a plea for a 'natural' usage of language, so that, for instance, 'masculine' things (such as 'wrath') should have a masculine grammatical gender (D24=A28=Arist. *Soph. el.* 14.173b17–22).[43]

Aside from the more specific connections with Democritus, this debate more generally stems from Presocratic anxieties over the relationship between language and the real world.[44] Cratylus was a famous Heraclitean, and some of Heraclitus' own fragments explore the relationship between words and their referents. The best-known instance is D53=B48, which plays upon the fact that *bios* is a homonym for both 'bow' and 'life': 'the name for the bow (τόξωι) is life (βίος), but its function is death'.[45] The name *bios* thus reveals one of the two oppositions, for Heraclitus, that are united in the bow.[46] His own *logos* seems to be formulated in such a manner as to map more closely onto his cosmos than ordinary speech, reflecting the notorious doctrine of the 'unity of opposites' in its puns and antitheses.[47] This aspect of Heraclitus' work may have been a factor in Plato's decision to explore the problem of words and their referents in a dialogue named after one of his followers. Be that as it may, after Heraclitus, Parmenides and Empedocles, as we have seen, continued to raise problems over the relationship between mortal language and the true reality that mortals mistakenly believe their language to represent.

Among the Sophists, the material for this debate was supplied, more often than not, by canonical poems, especially the Homeric epics. It is,

[41] For an overview of these debates and how they develop from Parmenidean and Empedoclean principles, see de Jonge and van Ophuijsen (2010) 487–90.
[42] Thus, Sluiter (1997) 176. [43] Thus Kerferd (1981) 68–9; although see n. 37 above.
[44] Kraus (1987) is a monograph devoted to this topic.
[45] βίος: τῶι οὖν τόξωι ὄνομα βίος, ἔργον δὲ θάνατος.
[46] Cf. also D55=B23; D45=B32. On Heraclitus on naming, see di Cesare (1980); Schmitter (1991); Sluiter (1997) 169–70.
[47] See the work cited at Introduction n. 19 above.

then, a further instance where the ontological and epistemological problems raised by the Presocratics provided the impetus for a development in the criticism of poetry. With Protagoras and Democritus' detailed discussions over whether Homer used the 'correct words' (or the Derveni commentator's explication of his Orphic theogony) we see a fine-grained analysis of a particular, fixed text, rather than, say, a spontaneous response to a song.[48] Both 'naturalist' and 'conventionalist' positions could be used to defend the text: in the *Cratylus*, Socrates demonstrates the naturalist position by arguing for the appropriateness of certain Homeric names (*Crat.* 390d5–393b6), whilst Democritus seems to have defended Homer as a successful manipulator of conventional language. Attacks on the poet in the vein of Xenophanes, Heraclitus and eventually Plato, seem to have been rare among the Sophists:[49] Protagoras, in boldly criticising the opening of the *Iliad*, appears as an exception. But in any case, this particular discussion of Homer revolves around the relationship between his vocabulary and its referents.

The treatment of this issue as a matter of poetic criticism may have been inspired by Parmenides and Empedocles: they assume that poetry is susceptible to this sort of close, fine-grained investigation concerning its relationship to reality, by inviting us to apply such a type of interpretation to parts of their own texts. Parmenides frames the *Doxa* as a deceptive *kosmos* of words, demanding a different type of scrutiny from the rest of the goddess' speech. Empedocles invites us to reflect upon the relationship between certain expressions he uses and the true, elemental cosmos to which they refer. In this respect, then, Parmenides and Empedocles already gesture towards the conception of poetry presupposed by Sophistic interpretative practices. The more specific influence of Parmenides on the broader epistemological questions explored by Democritus and the Sophists supports the contention that he was also a direct influence on their literary-critical work.

6 Plato and Mimesis

The naturalism/conventionalism debate concerned language in general and was only incidentally concerned with the criticism of poetry. But the

[48] I leave out of discussion here the vexed question of when the Homeric poems actually achieved textual fixity (almost certainly by the end of the sixth century – for a good overview, see Cassio [2002]). The question at hand does not concern when poetry actually did attain such a status, but rather at what point authors started to talk about poetry in this manner.

[49] As Morgan (2000) 97 puts it, with the Sophists, 'Homer has become an authority instead of a competitor.'

idea that it is a distinctive characteristic of poetry in particular to conjure a world separate from reality is already implicit in Democritus' comment that Homer created a *kosmos* of words. The Parmenidean intertext supports the notion that *kosmos*, in this instance, does not simply mean 'arrangement', but could also have the connotation of 'universe'.[50] However, the idea that it is an essential feature of poetry to create a world distinct from reality would most explicitly, most systematically and most influentially be articulated by Plato. As Halliwell puts it, Plato 'took two momentous steps toward turning mimesis into the backdrop for an entire philosophy of art. The first was to pose certain fundamental challenges to the status and value of artistic mimesis – challenges that have remained unsettling and less than completely resolved to this day. The second was to orientate questions of mimetic art around larger philosophical concerns with the relationship between mind and reality.'[51] It is far beyond my scope to offer anything approaching a substantial treatment of the enormous topic of Plato's thoughts on mimesis. More modestly, I wish to close this study by pointing out some respects in which the second of the steps identified by Halliwell – Plato's orientation of questions of mimetic art around larger epistemological questions – seems to have been substantially influenced by Xenophanes and Parmenides.

By the time of Plato, the verb *mimeisthai* and its cognates had long been used of poetic activity.[52] Most famously, the Delian maidens in the (probably late sixth-century BCE) Homeric *Hymn to Apollo*[53] are able to 'mimic' the voices of all people, to such a degree that 'anyone would think that he himself were speaking' (*hAp.* 162–4). Already, here, such a supernatural skill might seem ominous, a potential form of deception (as Helen's similar ability is at *Od.* 4.279). In the fifth century, Aristophanes has Agathon defend his effeminate dress on the grounds that he is composing plays about women. When men compose about men, they have what they need, but when they compose about women, he says, 'what we don't possess, *mimesis* captures' (Ar. *Thesm.* 155–6). Later, in the same play, the character of the Inlaw uses the verb *mimeisthai* of acting the part of Euripides' Helen (850).[54] Democritus is the earliest

[50] See Chapter 2 Section 3a above. [51] Halliwell (2002) 37.

[52] The most judicious overview is Halliwell (2002) 15–22, who rightly criticises the often-repeated view of Koller (1954) and Nagy (1989) 47–51 and (1994) that the term has its origins in ritual, a claim for which evidence is lacking.

[53] See Janko (1982) 112–5; West (2003a) 9–12; Richardson (2010) 13–15.

[54] Austin and Olson (2004) *ad loc.* argue that the Inlaw's use of the word simply means 'I will imitate' and not 'I will perform' (citing the parallel Aristophanic uses at *Nub.* 559; *Vesp.* 1019; *Eccl.* 545), but

attested philosopher or sophist to use the term *mimesis*, in claiming that humans learned song through *mimesis* of birds (D203=B154).

In Plato's *Republic*, when Socrates first introduces the concept of *mimesis* (3.392d5) in the course of discussing the education of the guardians of the ideal city, it is fully in accordance with these earlier usages: Homer engages in *mimesis* when relating direct speech, in other words, when, as primary narrator, he impersonates particular characters (392d5–394b1). Homer's non-mimetic speech, on the other hand, is *diegesis*, usually translated as 'narration' or 'narrative'. Socrates then categorises three genres on the basis of this distinction (394b9–c5): the 'mixed' genre, which includes epic and involves both *mimesis* and *diegesis*; the purely mimetic genre, which includes drama since it comprises entirely character-speech (at least, in its Greek versions); and the purely diegetic genre, which consists exclusively of narration, lacking direct speech, and according to Socrates includes Dithyramb.[55] The point is then made that an individual is generally only good at imitating one thing, rather than many things (394e8–9). Even actors seem to excel only at either comedy or tragedy (395a4–5). Moreover, what people 'imitate' becomes ingrained in their natures and affects their habits even when they are not imitating. For these reasons, the guardians must imitate only what is appropriate for them rather than attempting to imitate a variety of things and must especially avoid imitating that which is wicked, slavish, vulgar or mad (395b9–396b8). There is a practical consequence for the censorship of poetry within the city: only the pure poet-imitator of the decent sort of person will be admitted (397d1–4); the man who, like the Delian maidens, or like the Odyssean Helen, can imitate all sorts of people, though he may be admirably talented, will be excluded (398a1–b4). This is in spite of the fact that the latter's work will be more pleasant to all (397d5–8). Although Plato is often described as 'banishing the poets', he does not banish all poets, but retains the composer of the duller, less varied type of poetry (398a9–b4). It might be objected that Socrates has illicitly blurred the distinction between a performer's depiction of their literary content and an audience's reception of the performance, but this is to overlook the pervasive influence of Greek musical culture (of which poetry was a part) on society at large. The audience is not at risk of spontaneously copying the actions they see represented

the distinction is a fine one. Cf. Ar. *Ran.* 109, where *mimesis* refers to Dionysus' dressing up as Herakles.

[55] Despite the fact that our surviving Dithyrambs do sometimes contain direct speech (e.g. Bacchyl. 15.50–63; 17.20–46 etc.). On this issue, and the difficulty later ancient authors have in categorising Dithyramb, see Peponi (2013).

onstage; rather, the risk is that the performances will ingrain detrimental societal norms.[56] *Mimesis*, at this point in the dialogue, denotes a similar activity to the earlier attested usages: the 'imitators'' imitations are comparable to the Delian maidens' singing in various different voices, or to Agathon's impersonation of women, or to the Inlaw's impersonation of Helen.

Notoriously, however, the discussion surrounding poetry is resumed in the tenth book, where a more expansive sense of *mimesis* is explored. At the start of the book, Socrates recalls that he and his interlocutors did not permit any poetry that was 'mimetic' into the city (Τὸ μηδαμῇ παραδέχεσθαι αὐτῆς ὅση μιμητική, lit. 'the not-allowing of it [*sc.* Poetry], as much as is mimetic', 595a1). Contrary to some commentators, there is no contradiction here with the previous discussion, since not all poetry was 'mimetic', and the type to be permitted involved the least amount of *mimesis* in the narrow sense of 'impersonation' or direct speech (cf. 3.396e3–7).[57] Conversely, it is drama especially that appears to be excluded.[58] Later, we are told more specifically that the only permissible poetry is to be 'hymns to the gods and encomia to good people' (607a3–5). Again, this conclusion coheres with the earlier discussion, since such poems would be of the duller, more austere type allowed into the ideal city.

What emerges from book 10, however, is a more detailed explication of why mimetic poetry has an especially pernicious effect on the psyche, in appealing to the irrational part of the soul. To this end, Socrates expands the notion of *mimesis* to encompass the visual arts, in order to illustrate its ontological and epistemological aspects (cf. 597b1–3). A painter who paints a couch imitates the sensible couch, which was built by a carpenter, but the carpenter himself imitates the form of the couch, which could only have been built by a divine master-craftsman (597b1–e9). The painting of the couch is thus at 'third remove from truth': an imitation of an imitation of the form of the couch. The painter may be able to paint a lifelike picture of a couch, but you could not sit on it, nor would the painter need to know what makes a good couch in order to paint one – the only thing he would need to know about couches would be how one appears from a particular

[56] This feature is well discussed by Burnyeat (1997) 255–86. See also Halliwell (2002) 52.

[57] As Belfiore (1984) 126–7; Ferrari (1989) 124–5; and Burnyeat (1997) 289–92 argue, *contra* (e.g.) Annas (1982) 27 n. 37; Nehamas (1982) 51; Murray (1996) 184–7. The mistake derives from the application of a sense of *mimesis* as a quasi-pictorial representation that Socrates only develops later in the book and would become the basis for the Aristotelian and later senses of the term.

[58] Note how tragic lamentations and comic jokes are the examples of how *mimesis* corrupts even decent people (605c5–606c10), whilst the examples of the 'ancient quarrel' between poetry and philosophy come exclusively from comedy (607b2–d2), on which see Most (2011).

angle (598a1–c5). This example helps debunk the claim that poets are experts in all things: poets need not have knowledge of all the things they describe, just as a painter need not have knowledge of the couch he paints (598c5–601b1). Poets need not have knowledge or right opinion concerning generalship or justice or any other topics they depict; imitation is merely a kind of game (601a4–602b10). Since rational calculation would establish that *trompe l'œil* paintings are paintings, or that a stick in water only appears bent, this sort of imitation must appeal to the irrational part of the soul (602c4–603b5). Poetry can be an especially pernicious form of imitation, since it imitates actions in a manner that implies an evaluation. Poems may fool us into thinking that indulgent lamentation is an acceptable response to the loss of a loved one (603c5–606c1). Nevertheless, poets in search of praise will typically indulge the irrational part of the soul, portraying such sentimental scenes. It is for this reason that there is an 'ancient quarrel' between poetry and philosophy and almost all poets will be banned from the ideal city.

In expounding the problems of the relationship between *mimesis* and reality, Socrates uses the term in a sense that might seem applicable, not only to the more mimetic poetry, such as drama, but to poetry and language in general.[59] However, it should be noted that the emphasis of Book 10's discussion of poetic *mimesis* is still very much upon the depiction of particular actions (603c5–9): poetry in which the performer speaks *in propria persona*, without using direct speech, in praise of gods or of great men still need not be included within this category.[60] But, in any case, from book 3, the discussion has shifted from the general societal effects of *mimesis* to its ontological and epistemological basis, in which respect mimetic poetry is analogous to painting. What is significant, for our present purposes, is that the epistemological and ontological grounds on which Socrates raises these problems for poetry are in large part derived from Parmenides.

Book 10's claim that poetry is at 'third remove from the truth' relies upon the theory of the forms, elaborated in books 5–7. As has been acknowledged, this theory was clearly strongly influenced by Parmenides.[61] In the *Republic*, it is introduced towards the end of book 5

[59] Note how the discussion of poetic *mimesis* at 598d8–599a9 focuses on poets' knowledge of their subject matter more generally, rather than on specific episodes of direct speech.

[60] Later on, Aristotle removes the emphasis on direct speech, but maintains that *mimesis* involves the representation of actions, so that Empedocles' physical verse is non-mimetic (*Poet.* 1.1447a–b).

[61] On Plato's reception of Parmenides, see especially Palmer (1999), who discusses the connection with the sight-lovers in *Republic* 5 in detail (esp. pp. 31–55).

to distinguish true philosophers or 'lovers of wisdom' from the mere 'lovers of sight' (475d1–e4). The language and arguments that Socrates proposes to convince the sight-lover that he loves only a 'likeness' rather than a real thing (i.e. the form) bear an unmistakable resemblance to Parmenides' poem: the person who knows has knowledge of what-is (ὄν) rather than what-is-not (οὐκ ὄν) (476e6–477a1). As Glaucon asks, 'how could what-is-not be known?' (477a1, πῶς γὰρ ἂν μὴ ὄν γέ τι γνωσθείη; cf. Parm. D6.7=B2.7, 'for you would not know what-is-not', οὔτε γὰρ ἂν γνοίης τό γε μὴ ἐὸν). Socrates then argues that 'what is completely is completely knowable, and what is in no way is in every way unknowable' (477a2–5; cf. Parm. D6.5–6=B2.5–6, where the way of not-being is παναπευθέα, 'completely undiscernible', and D8.16=B8.11, where what-is 'is completely', πάμπαν πελέναι). Knowledge is of what-is and ignorance is of what-is-not (477a10–11), but what is between knowledge and ignorance is *doxa*, opinion (477b4–5). Socrates then reasons that since knowledge and opinion are different powers, they are set over different things (477c1–478b2). Knowledge is set over what-is, ignorance over what-is-not, but opinion is set over that which is and is not at the same time (478d5–9, note especially the resemblance between d5–6, ἅμα ὄν τε καὶ μὴ ὄν, 'at the same time being and not being', and Parmenides D7=B6.7–9, where mortals believe that 'being and not-being are the same and not the same'). Moreover, there is only one of each form, notably, only one form of the beautiful that is the object of knowledge, but many apparently beautiful things that are the object of opinion (478e7–479d9). The sight-lovers are lovers of opinions rather than lovers of knowledge (479d10–480a13). Just as Parmenides' goddess argues, the object of knowledge is singular, whilst the objects of opinion are plural and various. Socrates' sight-lovers are like Parmenides' mortals who are associated with 'that which-is and is-not' and who have opinions that they mistake for knowledge.

This section already foreshadows book 10's association of the theory of the forms with poetics, since the sight-lovers are in particular lovers of theatrical performances who attend all the Dionysiac festivals and listen to every chorus (475d1–e1). Book 10 then recalls the earlier, Parmenides-influenced discussion of the forms when Socrates invokes the claim that the carpenter does not make what he and his interlocutors have called the 'being' (that is, the form) of the bed (597a1–2). Indeed, one reason why the discussion of literary *mimesis* is postponed until book 10 is that it relies upon the epistemological and ontological claims made in books 5–6 and so would have made little sense in book 3. In short, then, the theory of literary *mimesis* expressed in book 10 of the *Republic* is conspicuously based upon

Parmenides' division between what-is and the world of mortal opinion. That Plato associated Eleatic arguments more generally with *mimesis* is further suggested by the fact that another theory of *mimesis* is put into the mouth of the Eleatic stranger in the *Sophist* (234b4ff.), an avowed follower of Parmenides.[62] With respect to the more specific issue of literary *mimesis*, I suggest that Parmenides' own use of verse was an influence on Plato's presentation of these ontological/epistemological theories as a problem for poetics. As I have argued, Parmenides' goddess, in introducing the world of opinion as a 'deceptive *kosmos* of words' (D8.57=B8.52) casts it as a world of poetic verisimilitude. There is already, then, the idea that the world of poetry is especially characteristic of the world of opinion. Plato combines this idea with the concept of *mimesis*, a term that had previously tended to refer more specifically to impersonation. This notion of *mimesis* qua representation (as opposed to mimicry or impersonation) would be taken up by Aristotle and would become an enduring topic in poetics and aesthetics.[63]

Furthermore, the aesthetic problem of the fact that the more varied 'mimetic' poetry will be more appealing to the masses than the homogenous, austere poetry seems an expansion of issues already evident in the Presocratic poets. The two genres that Socrates permits into the ideal city (10.607a3–5) are precisely the two genres of which Xenophanes approves in the symposium (D59=B1.13–14, 19–21). There is a good chance that Plato was influenced by Xenophanes in particular at this point, since Xenophanes is elsewhere presented by Plato as the founder of the 'Eleatic tribe' (*Soph.* 242d4–6) and, here, Socrates has relied upon Eleatic-inspired arguments. A division between a more appealing, more varied poetry and a less attractive, more homogeneous (but ultimately more justified) type is exhibited in Parmenides' poem. As we saw, this text has often met with scathing evaluations of its literary merits, but some praise has been reserved for the *Doxa*.[64] A more positive literary assessment of this section may be due to the same considerations Socrates adduces for the popularity of the

[62] On the relationship between the theories of *mimesis* in the *Sophist* and the *Republic*, see Halliwell (2002) 62–7.

[63] On which see, above all, Halliwell (2002). Cf. Ferrari (1989) 110 'This [*sc.* Book 10's argument that imitativeness has, by its very nature an ethical effect] is the truly path-breaking aspect of Plato's critique.'

[64] Most emphatically, Beaufret (1952) 8 declared that D27=B14, 'night-shining foreign light, wandering around the earth' was 'one of the most beautiful lines in the Greek language', a judgement qualifiedly endorsed by Mourelatos (2008a) 224, but described by Tarán (1977) 653 n. 5 as 'an attitude that reveals either little acquaintance with Greek poetry or poor taste or both'. *De gustibus* . . .

more mimetic kind of poetry: the little evidence we possess for the *Doxa* suggests that it was more varied and featured lush descriptions of the sensible world that contrast starkly with the singularity of the *Aletheia*'s account of what-is. Yet the more attractive *Doxa* is still a world of mortal deception. By devaluing what is a world of beautiful poetry on epistemological and ontological grounds, Parmenides anticipates Plato's 'quarrel between poetry and philosophy', although he does not yet put it in those terms.

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